



# AUTISM CONFERENCE

Caring for America's Heroes

S. Ward Casscells, MD

Assistant Secretary of Defense for  
Health Affairs

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# Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Autism Spectrum Disorders are:
  - Complex neurodevelopmental disorders of unknown etiology
  - Autistic Disorder (AD), Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDDNOS), and Asperger's Disorder (AS), DSM-IV-TR
  - When serious, apparent by age 2, diagnosis usually at 3–5 years
  - Nature & severity of deficits best indicator of treatment needs
- Core Deficits of ASD:
  - Communication Deficits—Lack of speech, lack of desire to communicate, lack of nonverbal compensatory efforts, such as gestures
  - Social Skills Deficits—decreased drive to connect with others and share complementary feeling states
  - Restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities





# DoD Autism Demonstration Highlights

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- More educational-intervention providers
  - Expanded definition of supervisors will increase number available
  - Newly defined provider class (Tutors) will make thousands of new providers available to implement such services as applied behavior analysis (ABA) to military families
  - Incentives for supervisors to bring on and train tutors
  
- Expanded services
  - Functional definition of covered services should permit families to have access to a greater range of existing evidence-based services





# DoD Autism Demonstration Highlights

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- Quality provisions
  - Education, training, experience and competency standards set for Tutors
  - Required supervision of Tutors (intensity of supervision is tied to level of experience)
  - Required supervision of certain supervisors
  - Diagnostic and functional assessment of child encouraged or required depending on clinical needs
  
- Widening availability of providers through technology
  - Web-based instruction of approved curricula permitted for Tutors
  - Video, web-based direct supervision of Tutors permitted allowing reach into remote and less well-served areas





# Status of Recommendations from DoD's 2007 Report to Congress

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1. Modify TRICARE policy to expand TRICARE–approved, supervisory-level ABA providers to other highly trained, but non-Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) certified professionals
  - Incorporated into the Autism demonstration
2. Permit TRICARE cost-sharing of services provided by ABA tutors
  - A central element of the Enhancing Access to Autism Demonstration
3. Conduct an independent comparative analysis of TRICARE demonstration standards
  - Funding proposal approved





# A Message from Maj. Gen. Elder Granger

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- The start date of the Autism Demo (NLT March 15, 2008) is the fastest TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) has ever put out a demo after the closing date and industry comment to the Federal Registry posting and closing. The record is due to the clockwork teamwork, cooperation and dedication of the entire TMA and managed care support contractor leadership and staff. Investing in our military children is without question a readiness, recruitment and retention multiplier, but most important, it is right thing to do for our children who are our future and the torch bearers of our Nation as we march, sail, and fly into the 21st Century. This is only the second step in our Nation's and DoD's journey to develop our children and adults with their fullest and productive potential. Thank you, God bless you, God bless our men and women of our Uniformed Services, God bless our children and adults with autism, and yes, God bless America!

