

By Senator Ring

32-00050B-10

2010214

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to autism; creating s. 381.986, F.S.;  
3       requiring that a physician refer a minor to an  
4       appropriate specialist for screening for autism  
5       spectrum disorder under certain circumstances;  
6       defining the term "appropriate specialist"; amending  
7       ss. 627.6686 and 641.31098, F.S.; defining the term  
8       "direct patient access"; requiring certain insurers  
9       and health maintenance organizations to provide direct  
10      patient access to an appropriate specialist for a  
11      minimum number of visits per year for the screening,  
12      evaluation, or diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder;  
13      providing an effective date.

14  
15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

16  
17       Section 1. Section 381.986, Florida Statutes, is created to  
18      read:

19       381.986 Screening for autism spectrum disorder.-

20       (1) If the parent or legal guardian of a minor who is an  
21      eligible individual, as defined in s. 627.6686 or s. 641.31098,  
22      believes that the minor exhibits symptoms of autism spectrum  
23      disorder, the parent or legal guardian may report his or her  
24      observation to a physician licensed in this state. The physician  
25      shall immediately refer the minor to an appropriate specialist  
26      for the screening for, evaluation of, or diagnosis of autism  
27      spectrum disorder. This section does not apply to a physician  
28      providing care under s. 395.1041.

29       (2) As used in this section, the term "appropriate

32-00050B-10

2010214

30 specialist” means a qualified professional who is experienced in  
31 the evaluation of autism spectrum disorder, who has training in  
32 validated diagnostic tools, and includes, but is not limited to,  
33 a person who is licensed in this state as:

34 (a) A psychologist;

35 (b) A psychiatrist;

36 (c) A neurologist;

37 (d) A developmental or behavioral pediatrician who  
38 specializes in child neurology; or

39 (e) A professional whose licensure is deemed appropriate by  
40 the Children’s Medical Services Early Steps Program within the  
41 Department of Health.

42 Section 2. Present paragraphs (c), (d), and (e) of  
43 subsection (2) of section 627.6686, Florida Statutes, are  
44 redesignated as paragraphs (d), (e), and (f), respectively, a  
45 new paragraph (c) is added to that subsection, and paragraph (a)  
46 of subsection (3) of that section is amended, to read:

47 627.6686 Coverage for individuals with autism spectrum  
48 disorder required; exception.—

49 (2) As used in this section, the term:

50 (c) “Direct patient access” means the ability of an insured  
51 to obtain services from an in-network provider without a  
52 referral or other authorization before receiving services.

53 (3) A health insurance plan issued or renewed on or after  
54 April 1, 2009, shall provide coverage to an eligible individual  
55 for:

56 (a) Direct patient access to an appropriate specialist, as  
57 defined in s. 381.986, for a minimum of three visits per policy  
58 year for the screening for, evaluation of, or diagnosis well-

32-00050B-10

2010214

59 ~~baby and well-child screening for diagnosing the presence of~~  
60 autism spectrum disorder.

61 Section 3. Present paragraphs (c) and (d) of subsection (2)  
62 of section 641.31098, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as  
63 paragraphs (d) and (e), respectively, a new paragraph (c) is  
64 added to that subsection, and paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of  
65 that section is amended, to read:

66 641.31098 Coverage for individuals with developmental  
67 disabilities.—

68 (2) As used in this section, the term:

69 (c) "Direct patient access" means the ability of a  
70 subscriber to obtain services from an in-network provider  
71 without a referral or other authorization before receiving  
72 services.

73 (3) A health maintenance contract issued or renewed on or  
74 after April 1, 2009, shall provide coverage to an eligible  
75 individual for:

76 (a) Direct patient access to an appropriate specialist, as  
77 defined in s. 381.986, for a minimum of three visits per policy  
78 year for the screening for, evaluation of, or diagnosis ~~Well-~~  
79 ~~baby and well-child screening for diagnosing the presence of~~  
80 autism spectrum disorder.

81 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2010.