

SENATE BILL SUMMARY

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SB 214
Autism
by Senator Ring

Defines an "appropriate specialist" as a qualified professional who is experienced in the evaluation of autism spectrum disorder, who has training in validated diagnostic tools, and includes, but is not limited to, a person who is licensed in this state as a psychologist, psychiatrist, neurologist, a developmental or behavioral pediatrician who specializes in child neurology, or a professional whose licensure is deemed appropriate by the Children's Medical Services Early Steps Program within the Department of Health. Requires a physician to refer a minor whose parent or legal guardian believes the minor has autism spectrum disorder to an appropriate specialist immediately for screening, evaluation, or diagnosis.

Defines "direct patient access" as the ability of an insured to obtain services from an in-network provider without a referral or other authorization before receiving services. Requires certain insurers and HMOs to provide direct patient access to an appropriate specialist for a minimum of three visits per policy year for the screening, evaluation, or diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. (See bill for details)