

The Iowa Autism Council

August 7, 2012

The Honorable Terry Branstad
Governor
Executive Office
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Re: Expansion of Medicaid under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Dear Governor Branstad:

The expansion of Medicaid to cover individuals below 133% of poverty level provides access to essential health services to thousands of Iowans previously ineligible, including those with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, improving people's productivity and keeping them out of expensive institutions. It also strengthens compliance with the Supreme Court's *Olmstead* decision, to which your office has pledged full commitment. Few would argue the point that timely access to mental health services can prevent costly and inappropriate use of emergency rooms and acute care facilities. Expansion of Medicaid, supported ninety to one hundred percent with federal funds, also promises to reduce the burden on hospitals—and ultimately taxpayers—for uncompensated care.

Your recent statement that you oppose increased access to Medicaid services is of great concern to Iowans with Autism Spectrum Disorder's and their advocates. This constituency has inordinate experience with the real economic costs that accrue when people don't get the care and early interventions services they need. Denying access to needed health care to the thousands of Iowans who would benefit from the expansion of Medicaid coverage not only undermines Iowa's laudable initiative to become the healthiest state in the nation, we believe it also puts vulnerable Iowans at risk of future care and cost in more restrictive and expensive settings.

The Iowa Autism Council asks you to recommit to your focus on and concern for the good of all Iowans, but particularly those who are most in need and most vulnerable. On behalf of the individuals and families who rely on health care just to stay alive, let alone to work and pay taxes and care for their families, we urge you to reconsider your position on Medicaid expansion.

Sincerely,

Joshua Cobbs,
Chairperson
The Iowa Autism Council