

By: Representatives Felsher, Massengill,  
Nelson

To: Public Health and Human  
Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 807

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE DIVISION OF AUTISM SERVICES WITHIN  
2 THE BUREAU OF INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES OF THE  
3 STATE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH TO DEVELOP AND COORDINATE AUTISM  
4 SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AND THEIR  
5 FAMILIES; TO SPECIFY THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE DIVISION; TO  
6 BRING FORWARD SECTION 41-4-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH  
7 SPECIFIES THE DIVISIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT, FOR POSSIBLE AMENDMENT;  
8 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

10 **SECTION 1.** (1) As used in this section, the following terms  
11 shall be defined as provided in this subsection:

12 (a) "Autism spectrum disorder" or "ASD" shall be  
13 defined by the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical  
14 Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric  
15 Association.

16 (b) "Autism services" means services designed to meet  
17 the needs of individuals with ASD across their lifespan, including  
18 services selected in collaboration with the parents or guardians  
19 of children with ASD or adults with ASD and services delivered in  
20 inclusive environments, to the extent practical, and services that  
21 are part of a coordinated system of care.



22 (c) "Coordinated system of care" means the total  
23 statewide effort, inclusive of case management, that is directed  
24 at meeting the needs of individuals with ASD and their families.

25 (2) There is an urgent and substantial need to develop and  
26 implement a statewide comprehensive, coordinated,  
27 multidisciplinary, interagency system of care for individuals with  
28 autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families. To help  
29 address that need, there is established the Division of Autism  
30 Services within the Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental  
31 Disabilities of the State Department of Mental Health to develop  
32 and coordinate autism services for individuals with ASD and their  
33 families.

34 (3) The Division of Autism Services, under the supervision  
35 of the Director of the Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental  
36 Disabilities, shall provide leadership in program development for  
37 children and adults with ASD, including establishment of program  
38 standards and coordination of program capacity. The Division of  
39 Autism Services shall have the following powers and duties:

40 (a) To define the roles and responsibilities of the  
41 division;

42 (b) To develop a long-term plan, reviewed annually, for  
43 a comprehensive statewide coordinated system of care for  
44 individuals with ASD, which, to the extent practicable, is derived  
45 from scientific-based research and nationally recognized best  
46 practices; and



47 (c) To ensure interagency collaboration, public  
48 participation, and mutual sharing of information to facilitate  
49 policy decisions and the implementation of a plan for a  
50 comprehensive statewide system of care to individuals with ASD.

51 **SECTION 2.** Section 41-4-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
52 brought forward as follows:

53 41-4-5. There is created the State Department of Mental  
54 Health, herein referred to as "department," which shall consist of  
55 four (4) or more divisions, among them the Division of  
56 Intellectual Disabilities, the Division of Alcohol and Drug  
57 Misuse, the Division of Mental Health, and the Division of  
58 Administration, Planning and Coordination, and such other  
59 divisions as the board deems appropriate.

60 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
61 and after July 1, 2025.

