

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.

