



ASSOCIATION OF MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMS

AMCHP RESPONDS TO HRSA/CDC REPORT ON INCREASED PREVALENCE OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) IN SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Mar. 20, 2013 (Washington, DC) – The prevalence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in school-aged children has increased from 1.2 in 2007 to 2 percent in 2011-2012, or one in 50 children, according to a report released today by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The report was based on parental reporting using the National Survey of Children’s Health, a national sample of families across the country. The report, “Changes in Prevalence of Parent-Reported Autism Spectrum Disorder in School-Aged Children: 2007 to 2011-2012” is available at www.cdc.gov/nchs. Last year, the CDC Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network estimated that one in 88 children had been identified with ASD.

The changes in ASD prevalence were greatest for boys and adolescents aged 14-17, while much of the increase in the prevalence estimates from 2007 to 2011-2012 for school-aged children was the result of diagnoses of children with previously unrecognized ASD.

“The estimates released by CDC and HRSA today help provide more insight into the increasing prevalence with autism spectrum disorder in America,” said AMCHP CEO Michael Fraser. “As CDC and HRSA note, we continue to need more information and understanding of why some children are identified with autism before others, as well as the impact of early and more widespread screening for ASD and other developmental disabilities.

“We do know that the rising numbers of children identified with ASD have led to increased pressure on states to ensure that all children and youth with ASD receive early and timely identification, diagnosis and intervention. These efforts are undermined by continued budget cuts including sequestration. Nevertheless, state Title V maternal and child health and children and youth with special health care needs programs – through involvement with the HRSA Combating Autism Initiative and CDC *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* campaign – have played key roles in initiating and leading comprehensive efforts to build these systems of care, but we continue to need better understanding of both the disorder and effective screening and interventions to best help families.”

For more information about AMCHP work to support systems of care for children and youth with autism spectrum disorder through its State Public Health Autism Resource Center (SPHARC) and work with the CDC *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* campaign, please visit www.amchp.org/SPHARC.

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The AMCHP mission is to support state maternal and child health programs and provide national leadership on issues affecting women and children. For more information, please contact Brent Ewig, Director of Policy, at bewing@amchp.org or call (202) 226.3041.