

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

April 18, 2021

Dear Representative Kahle,

I write to express my strong support for HB 4657, which would require private insurance companies to cover the costs of parent-implemented intervention for children with autism. I am a professor of clinical psychology at Michigan State University, a licensed psychologist and BCBA-D, and have been researching parent-implemented interventions for children with ASD for over 20 years. I am also the co-developer of Project ImPACT, a parent-implemented intervention that is designed to improve social communication development in young children with and at-risk for autism.

As an expert in this area, I am very glad to see legislation that compels insurance companies to provide coverage for parent-implemented interventions. Below, I highlight several factors from my own and others' research as well as my personal experience working this area for why such coverage is necessary.

- PII is considered best practice in the field of autism intervention. It is evidence-based and has been shown to lead to improvements for both children and their families. Parents report that PII is the most important intervention for enhancing child skills and family functioning.
- Parent-implemented intervention (PII) is an important component of family-centered care and is appropriate for children across development. It can be used to target a range of skills and presenting difficulties, including building communication, social interaction, self-help skills, and addressing challenging behaviors.
- PII can and should be used effectively by trained providers from various backgrounds (e.g., ABA, speech-language pathology, psychology, occupational therapy).
- PII is cost-effective - it takes fewer hours of professional time to achieve similar outcomes.
- My own experience with Project ImPACT has shown me the incredible power that teaching parents how to better connect with their child and help their child develop new skills can have, not only for the child, but also for the family. If you are interested in a brief video of what PII involves, please view this brief video on Project ImPACT: [www.project-impact.org](http://www.project-impact.org)
- Despite best practice guideline recommendations to provide PII and the availability of a number of evidence-based PII programs, it is under-utilized in community settings. Many parents report difficulty finding providers who can deliver high quality PII in their community. Expanding insurance coverage for PII is an important step for increasing families' access to PII.

I also want to emphasize that PII should be viewed as an essential component of a comprehensive treatment program for children with ASD, but NOT as a replacement for direct, evidence-based therapy approaches.

Thank you for supporting this bill.

Sincerely,



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