



# AUTISM SPECTRUM

The Official Monthly Publication of the Autism Society of New Hampshire

PO Box 68, Concord, NH 03302 ~ 603-679-2424 ~ [www.nhautism.com](http://www.nhautism.com)

February 2010 Issue

## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

Dear Friends,



Welcome to a new year and a brand new issue of the *Autism Spectrum* newsletter! In an effort to ‘Go green!’, ASNH will now produce a MONTHLY, electronic issue of the *Autism Spectrum* newsletter. This new format will replace the 4 quarterly newsletters mailed to your home each year. Now the ASNH can bring you more current and up-to-date information on the issues and events surrounding autism spectrum disorders to your mailbox each month! While some information in the *Autism Spectrum* will be new (see our new Workshop Calendar and ‘Resource of the Month’), we will continue to recognize those people in our community who are making a difference in the lives of individuals and families living with autism. We will also continue to provide you with valuable information on the topics that are important to you. Our ‘Board Member Spotlight’ will introduce you to the people behind the scenes at the ASNH who are working hard to keep autism spectrum disorder in the forefront and minds of people in the state of N.H. and in the coming months, we’ll feature our new ‘Member Spotlight’ ...stay tuned members! I might just be contacting YOU for the next edition!

I’d like to extend a very special thank you to our advertising supporters SERESC and The Lakeview School, and attorney John Kitchen, JD, LLM for contributing to this edition, and a heartfelt thanks to our members for their continued, loyal support. I hope you enjoy reading this new edition of the *Autism Spectrum*.

Warmest regards,

Heather ☺

Editor, *Autism Spectrum* newsletter

## IN THIS ISSUE:

President’s Message – update on Connor’s Law HB 569.....	Page 2 & 3
Board Member Spotlight – Meet Jocelyn Lister, SLP, CCC.....	Page 4
What Can a Family Member Purchase under Federal SSI Law?.....	Page 5
Workshop calendar.....	Page 6
FYI.....	Page 7 & 8

Dear Members ,

I hope you enjoyed a peaceful holiday season and a safe and healthy start to the New Year.

I want to take this opportunity to highlight the exciting news regarding HB 569, or “Connor’s Law”. On January 6<sup>th</sup>, HB 569 was passed by the House of Representatives with overwhelming support of 213 to 147. Special thanks go out to the lead sponsor of the bill Rep. Suzanne Butcher (D-Keene), Rep. Susi Nord (D-Candia) of the House Committee on Commerce, Kirsten Murphy – Executive Director of the NH Council on ASD, the Autism Society, members of our state agencies and organizations, and parents and family members for all of their tireless work and advocacy.

While this is a reassuring victory, we have one final hurdle to clear. The bill needs to go before the Senate. Below, please find important talking points to review and keep in mind while reaching out to our legislators in the Senate to educate them on this bill and seek their support.

Warm Regards,  
~Michelle

*Michelle Jarvis*  
*President*  
*Autism Society of New Hampshire*

### **HB 569, Connor’s Law**

*An ACT clarifying insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of pervasive developmental disorder or autism.*

The NH Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders reported in 2008 that few of the approximately 2000 children in NH with ASD have received or are receiving treatment that meets

American Academy of Pediatric’s guidelines – a failure that will cost NH millions long term.

#### **HB 569 is not a new mandate.**

HB 569 clarifies what “treatment” means in NH’s existing mental health parity law as it is applied to autism spectrum disorders (ASD). It says that treatment should be prescribed by a medical professional following the guidelines adopted by the American Academy of Pediatrics and other professional groups. Just like any illness, treatment would be subject to periodic review for medical necessity.

#### **Autism spectrum disorder is a treatable condition.**

Individuals who have a diagnosis of ASD experience difficulty communicating and interacting socially. The Centers for Disease Control announced in December that ASD affects 1 in every 110 children born today. While the severity of ASD varies widely, **all children with ASD will need some type of medically necessary treatment** in order to reach their full potential. This might include speech and occupational therapy, psychological service, and/or behavior-based therapy, which is often called “Applied Behavior Analysis” (ABA).

#### **HB 569 will save NH money.**

- Ø There is **no fiscal impact** to the State of New Hampshire as a result of HB 569.
- Ø A independent study requested by the House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Affairs found that the impact of covering treatments under this updated definition would be .2% to .4% or 77 cents to \$1.42/member/month.

Ø **Timely and intensive treatment saves money:** Most children make significant developmental gains, thereby reducing the need for services later. A cost benefit analysis of HB 569 shows that it will save \$597.8 million dollars, largely in adult developmental services that will not be needed by individuals who received treatment in childhood.

**HB 569 brings needed clarification to NH's mental health parity law.**

Ø Autism is a complex and challenging condition. Understandably, there has been confusion about what constitutes evidence-based treatment. For example, insurers often argue that ABA is an "experimental" treatment, despite almost 50 years of peer reviewed research that demonstrates its effectiveness for children with ASD.

Ø Fifteen states have already adopted bills similar to HB 569 that align insurance coverage with the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

**HB 569 does not replace existing services**

Ø While special education programs may use some of the same types of therapies to help a child learn, this is not done at the same level of intensity or with the same goals as a treatment program. HB 569 states clearly that it should not be interpreted as reducing the obligation that schools have to deliver a free and appropriate education.

Visit [www.connorslaw.info](http://www.connorslaw.info) to see how you can help.

**All Treat, no Trick!**



On Halloween night, 2009, Ray and Yvonne Frederickson of the Cannon Mountain View Motel Restaurant and Tavern hosted a fundraiser to benefit the ASNH.

Together with their patrons, they raised a total of \$750!

All of us at the Autism Society of N.H. are so grateful to them for their support, generosity and help in raising awareness about autism.

You can learn more about the **Cannon Mountain View Motel Restaurant and Tavern** by visiting them online at [www.cannonmtview.com](http://www.cannonmtview.com)

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## BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: JOCELYN LISTER, MA/CCC



**Jocelyn G. Lister, MA/CCC**, is a speech and language pathologist with over thirty years of experience in the field of speech therapy. During this time, Mrs. Lister has provided direct and consultative speech pathology services to school systems, as well as preschool and clinical settings. She has worked extensively with students who have been diagnosed with ASD, and currently specializes in social skill development for this population of individuals. She co-founded and developed the successful Camp Connect program, a five week summer social skills curriculum to teach children how to learn and implement friendship skills through practical experiences. She leads a variety of social skill classes throughout the year both in Bedford and Portsmouth. Currently she continues to develop her private practice in Portsmouth, where she developed “The Saturday Series”, a six week set of workshops designed to give parents and professionals an understanding of the basic foundational skills needed to support individuals with Asperger’s Syndrome, Autism, Nonverbal Learning Disability and other diagnoses where pragmatic language deficits impact an individual’s ability to engage with others in their workplace and community. Ms. Lister is currently teaching a graduate level course at Antioch University of New England in Keene. This course is designed to teach professionals how to structure and encourage social skill development for small groups of individuals with a diagnosed deficit in pragmatic language.

In addition to this focus of instruction, Ms. Lister is skilled at teaching children with lagging language development, severe articulation impairment including childhood developmental apraxia, and those with phonological awareness deficits. She brings a love of drama and music to each creative session of treatment and exudes warmth and confidence to encourage students to try their best. This winning combination results in successful treatment outcomes for all students in her care.

Jocelyn was born in Newfoundland, Canada and loves to return to her homeland as much as time allows, where family and friends provide a strong connection to her heritage and love for fish and brewis. Ask her about this ancient Newfie custom when you see her next!! Her love of the ocean stemmed from having grown up in St. John’s, a city built around the harbor close to Cape Spear, the most easterly point in North America. She has traveled extensively and continues to enjoy meeting new people, exploring new areas and learning about other cultures. Although her French is a bit rusty, she was quite fluent in this language in her younger days, and Jocelyn really enjoys any opportunity where she can use her French or the smattering of Spanish that she acquired when visiting Honduras on her mission trips in 2006 and 2007. Although too often she is busy working, Jocelyn passionately enjoys trips to the beach, hikes in the woods, and time with friends and family. Wishing you all a happy and healthy 2010!

# What Can a Family Member Purchase for a Person with Disabilities, and What Is A Person With Disabilities Allowed to Own, Under Federal SSI Law?

By: John S. Kitchen, JD, LLM  
johnkitchenlawoffices.com

**1. Can a family member buy groceries or pay rent for a person with disabilities without it impacting eligibility? BASICALLY NO.** The SSI “food and shelter” standard is one of the most important federal regulations to remember. If a family member purchases food or shelter for a person receiving SSI, he or she may cause a reduction in public benefits. To understand the SSI “food and shelter” standard, it is important to understand the specific definitions of the words “food” and “shelter” in the SSI regulations and the SSI Program Operations Manual System (POMS) particularly “shelter”.

The Social Security Administration’s definition of shelter “generally includes ‘room’ and ‘rent’ as well as other items such as heating fuel, gas electricity, water, sewerage, and garbage collection services.” See 20 CFR 416.1130. However, the Social Security Administration does not consider payment of “telephone bills” to be shelter under POMS SI 00815.400(B)(2). In addition, some expenditures that ensure an individual remains comfortable at home are not considered disqualifying shelter. For example, “any assistance related to...heating or cooling a home, including portable heaters, fans and blankets.” See 20 CFR 416.1157. “House cleaning” and “homemaker services,” both of which may be essential for a person with a physical impairment, also do not constitute shelter. See 20 CFR 416.1103(b). Also, a home owned by a person with disabilities or their special needs trust does not disqualify the individual from SSI benefits. See POMS SI 01120.200F.2. Furthermore, purchases of various household goods are not considered shelter. See 20 CFR 416.1103(j) and 20 CFR 416.1201. More specifically, “furniture, appliances, electronic equipment such as personal computers and television sets, carpets, cooking and eating utensils, and dishes” are permissible purchases. See 20 CFR 416.1216. Likewise, “personal care items and educational or recreational items such as books or musical instruments” are permitted, as are “items required because of an individual’s impairment.” See 20 CFR 416.1216. Other expenditures to keep an individual’s home in good repair, including “weatherization,” “insulation, storm doors and windows” and “lawn mowing” are not considered shelter. See 20 CFR 416.1103(i) and (g). Knowing the exclusions from the definitions of “food” and “shelter” enables loved ones and trustees to increase the quality of life for persons with disabilities while still protecting essential governmental benefits.

**2. Can a family member or special needs trust pay bills other than for food or shelter? BASICALLY YES.** “Payment of your bills by someone else directly to the supplier is not income” under 20 CFR 416.1103(g). This is perhaps the most important of the “safe harbor” expenditure provisions in the federal regulations because this provision explicitly permits all payments made to vendors, if for goods and services other than for food or shelter. This SSA regulation then provides some examples to illustrate this important distribution rule: “Examples: If your daughter uses her own money to pay the grocer to provide you with food, the payment itself is not your income because you did not receive it. However, because of your daughter’s payment, the grocer provides you with food; the food is in-kind income to you. On the other hand if your brother pays a lawn service to mow your grass, the payment is not income to you because the mowing cannot be used to meet your needs for food and shelter. Therefore, it is not in-kind income as defined in 20 CFR 416.1102.

**About the Author:** John S. Kitchen is an attorney in private practice in New Hampshire, who has written articles published by the National College of Probate Judges and the Research Institute of America (RIA), and has drafted special needs trusts legislation enacted into law in New Hampshire. John has a family member with disabilities.



# FEBRUARY 2010

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT A PARTICULAR WORKSHOP, CTRL/CLICK THE WORKSHOP HOST (IN BLUE) TO LINK DIRECTLY TO THEIR WEBSITE!

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	<a href="#">PIC</a> Extended School Year 2 locations	<a href="#">SERESC</a> Autism Basics	<a href="#">SERESC</a> Autism Basics	<a href="#">UNH-IOD</a> Families in the Secondary Transition Process	<a href="#">A.R.T.S.</a> Valentine's Day Workshop 3-6 p.m.	<a href="#">ANTIOCH NE</a> ABA Cert. Program
<a href="#">AANE</a> Staying Safe: Looking at Relationships	8	9	<a href="#">SERESC</a> What's Love Got to Do with it	11	12	13
14	15	<a href="#">PIC</a> Life After High School	*Autism 911 Registration Goffstown 5:30p-7:30p	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

\*For more information, contact Lieutenant Robert Brown at 497-4858.

**REMINDER to our Members**  
 If you have been a member of the ASNH for 6 months or more, you are eligible for a scholarship up to \$75.00\* on any workshop listed in the above calendar or any future workshop listed on the **ASNH event calendar**. See a complete list on our website [www.nhautism.com](http://www.nhautism.com)

\*For details on scholarship guidelines & additional funding sources, click here: [ASNH Scholarship guidelines](#)

The ASNH does not endorse any of the content listed in the above calendar. It is being provided strictly for informational purposes.

HBO Documentaries presents

## Temple Grandin

Saturday, February 6, 8 p.m.

To learn more, visit

<http://www.hbo.com/movies?cmpid=s6>

## N.H. Support Group List:

***New!*** Support Group for parents in  
***Hudson, N.H.***

Click on link below for a schedule of all  
support groups:

[N.H. Support Groups](#)

**Can't make it to a support group  
meeting? Connect with families on the**  
[ASNH Message Board](#)

**NEW to our message board!**

A Dad-to-Dad Forum has been set up to  
give Dads a place to connect with each  
other and talk about their experiences  
and concerns.

## Looking for AutismPro?



Or Looking for Clinical Training  
to Support AutismPro?

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½ page ad for 12 month commitment only \$180!

Become a \*Professional Member of the ASNH by  
February 26 and receive 3 - ½ page ads for FREE!  
(\$45 savings!)

Contact Editor- [heather@nhautism.com](mailto:heather@nhautism.com)

### *Resource of the Month:*

#### *'Plugged In'*

*(N.H. Family Voices)*

*'A New Hampshire Transition Guide for Young People  
with Special Health Care Needs or Disabilities 2008'*

*Do you have a child who is transitioning out of  
high school this year? Do you have questions  
about higher education, jobs and benefits such as  
S.S.I.?*

*To read or download a copy of 'Plugged In', visit  
N.H. Family Voices website: [www.nhfv.org](http://www.nhfv.org)  
and click on 'publications'.*

### *Camp Connect*

**Manchester**

**&**

**Dover**

**July 6-August 5, 2010**

Contact Easter Seals The  
Family Place for details and  
information

(603) 895-1522

or email

[spaplaskas@eastersealsnh.org](mailto:spaplaskas@eastersealsnh.org)

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