

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Health and
Human Services



Massachusetts Autism Commission

**Carolyn J. Kain
Executive Director**



Autism Omnibus Law



The Autism Omnibus Law was enacted in August 2014. The Law created the Autism Commission, which consists of 35 members.

- The Secretary of EOHHS is the Chairperson
- There are two members of the Senate and two members of the House of Representatives
- Sixteen (16) members from agencies
- Fifteen (15) members appointed by the Governor, 1 individual with Autism, 7 who are representative of specific organizations and 6 additional appointed members.



Duties of the Commission



The commission shall make recommendations on policies impacting individuals with autistic spectrum disorders, which shall include, but not be limited to, asperger's syndrome, high functioning autism, smith-magenis syndrome and pervasive development disorder. The commission shall investigate the range of services and supports necessary for such individuals to achieve their full potential across their lifespan, including, but not limited to, investigating issues related to public education, higher education, job attainment and employment, including supported employment, provision of adult human services, post-secondary education, independent living, community participation, housing, social and recreational opportunities, behavioral services based on best practices to ensure emotional well-being, mental health services and issues related to access for families of children with autism spectrum disorder and adults who are from linguistically and culturally diverse communities.



Executive Director



The Autism Omnibus Law also created the position of Executive Director.

. Duties of the executive director shall include, but not be limited to: (i) reporting on the progress of implementation of the 13 recommendations of the March 2013 Massachusetts autism commission report with periodic benchmarks and cost estimates for a coordinated, system-wide response supporting people of all ages on the autism spectrum; (ii) coordination of commission meetings; (iii) coordination with relevant state agencies; and (iv) completion of the annual report.



Subcommittees



The Autism Commission has established six (6) subcommittees, co-chaired by a state agency representative and an appointed member of the Commission.

- Birth to 14 years of Age
- 14 to 22+ Years of Age (Education and Employment)
- Adults
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Labor and Workforce Development



Omnibus Law



Changes that resulted from the Omnibus Law.

The 2014 Autism Omnibus Law required: a) the creation of tax-free “ABLE” accounts for qualified disability expenses; b) a comprehensive program of community developmental disability services by the Department of Developmental Services; c) the Department of Developmental Services (“DDS”) issuing of licenses to providers for individuals with developmental disabilities for a term of two years; d) the creation of an autism endorsement for special education teachers by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; e) Coverage by MassHealth of medically necessary treatments under the age of 21 including ABA services and augmentative and alternative communication devices, subject to federal financial participation;



Omnibus Law



f) a plan between DDS and the Department of Mental Health to provide services to individuals who have both a developmental disability and a mental illness; g) and further investigation and study by the Commission on the issues of employment and higher education, and housing and h) Commission recommendations for plans of action for the Commonwealth on higher education and employment, and housing for individuals with ASD.