

September 22, 2015

The Honorable Governor Nikki R. Haley

Governor of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

1205 Pendleton Street

Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Governor Haley,

My name is Danielle Christine Martin. I am a Registered Nurse in Charleston, SC. I am writing to ask for your assistance with ABA therapy coverage for my nephew. Mason (my nephew) is a nine year old autistic child who has attended ABA therapy since he was four years old. Up until June of 2015, our family has paid for his therapy. We have either paid with private (very expensive) insurance or out of our own pockets. Mason has made amazing strides and is now attending public school for the first time in his life. He still attends ABA therapy after school (approximately 20 hours per week) which is covered by the incredible program that replaced the PPD waiver. We had been on the waitlist for almost two years and had basically given up on that ever coming to fruition. We assumed Mason would age out before our number came up. Up until July 2015 Mason had United Healthcare private insurance as well as Medicaid coverage. In April, we were given the devastating news that his policy had changed as of January 1, 2015. The new policy would no longer cover his ABA therapy because of the Medicaid expansion coverage. As you can imagine, they are not going to pay for anything they do not have

to. The problem is that I did not learn that his therapy was not covered until April. Therefore, Mason kept attending his ABA therapy at almost 35 hours per week. We racked up a bill of \$12,000 before we were informed of the policy changes. I quickly learned that SC Medicaid had created a new program to bridge the gap for all of the children on the waitlist. We applied for the coverage and were quickly given approval starting June 1, 2015. However, when I asked about going retroactive Jaya Wall from SCDHHS said that the coverage was not approved to do that. I wasn't too worried because I was just so grateful that his therapy would be paid for from that point on and I figured I could find grants (as I have in the past) to pay for his past due balance. I am having no luck with that. Most grants will not pay for past services, only future or new services. His clinic, Aspire LLC in Goose Creek, SC, has been awesome in working with us. However, they are starting to ask for some payments. I am a single "mother" (aunt) who is struggling just to make ends meet, let alone pay \$10,000-\$15,000 in back payments. So after that extremely long drawn out story, I am basically asking for your help in getting the Medicaid program to go back to January to pay for his services. I did not know this coverage was available or I would have applied in January. It would have saved me over \$1,000 in insurance payments alone. I am begging for your help. I am also sending a similar letter to Dr. Liggett asking for his assistance.

Sincerely, Danielle C. Martin

September 22, 2015