



March 10, 2009

Dear Senator Looney and Representative Janowski,

I write to you today on behalf of the thousands of families across the state of Connecticut who are directly impacted by autism spectrum disorder.

As you may know, autism impacts an increasing number of people. An estimated 1 in 123 individuals in the State of Connecticut are diagnosed with autism, a number that is higher than the national average of 1 in 150.

Unfortunately, even as our numbers increase, autism remains the most underfunded childhood disorder in the country. In times of economic crisis such as these, insurers and providers are often most likely to cut funds allocated towards serving the autism community. Connecticut families already burdened with the challenges of caring for a loved one with autism struggle to navigate the complex landscape of diminishing healthcare reimbursement.

For this reason, our community now more than ever, needs Kevin Lembo to remain in his capacity as Healthcare Advocate. We respectfully ask that his invaluable skills remain a resource to the families of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannon Knall".

Shannon Knall
Connecticut Chapter Advocacy Chair
Autism Speaks