
News Releases

For more information, contact us:

Joel Fosha

Indiana Institute on Disability and Community

812-855-6508

foshaj@indiana.edu

Director of IU's Resource Center for Autism Attends White House Meeting

Indiana University Media Relations Press Release (April 14, 2010)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2010

BLOOMINGTON, IND. -- Cathy Pratt, board chair of the Autism Society and director of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism at Indiana University Bloomington, recently attended a meeting hosted by the White House to discuss the Obama Administration's efforts on autism research and to express support of families and individuals affected by autism.

The meeting took place April 2, in conjunction with World Autism Awareness Day and National Autism Awareness Month, and included representatives of other national advocacy organizations and service agencies.

Pratt thanked the administration for its investment in research through federal stimulus funds, and asked government officials to address the crisis needs of families with autism, including respite care, employment, navigation of service systems and training of professionals.

Melody Barnes, director of President Barack Obama's Domestic Policy Council, opened the meeting, expressing the administration's commitment to serving autism through collaboration on research and programs across all agencies. Kareem Dale, special assistant to the president for disability policy, and Jeff Crowley, senior adviser on disability policy, discussed the commitment of the administration to the special and complex needs of people with disabilities as part of the implementation of the recently passed health care reform legislation.

Dr. Howard Koh, assistant secretary for health and human services, discussed his agency's "Healthy People Response" effort, which aims to gain greater understanding of cause and treatments of autism but also create better systems of care to address the fact that "families have difficulty navigating the

non-systems we have" to address autism.

Also in attendance were Dr. Peter Van Dyck, associate administrator for maternal and child health, and Dr. Thomas R. Insel, director of the National Institute of Mental Health.

For more information, contact Pratt at prattc@indiana.edu or 812-855-6508. For more information about the Indiana Institute, visit www.iidc.indiana.edu.

About autism: Autism is a complex neurodevelopmental disability that typically appears during the first two years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. There is no known single cause for autism, but increased awareness and funding can help families today.

About the [Autism Society](http://www.autism-society.org): The Autism Society, the nation's leading grassroots autism organization, exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism. It does this by increasing public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the spectrum, advocating for appropriate services for individuals across the lifespan, and providing the latest information regarding treatment, education, research and advocacy. For more information, visit <http://www.autism-society.org>.

About the [Indiana Resource Center for Autism](#): The Indiana Resource Center is part of the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, an Indiana University Bloomington research and training center committed to providing Hoosiers with disability-related information and services that touch the entire life span, from birth through older adulthood. Staff conduct outreach training and consultations, engage in research and develop and disseminate information focused on building the capacity of local communities, organizations, agencies and families to support children and adults across the autism spectrum.