



*Supporting families who care for children with special needs*

March 7, 2011

Senator Johnny Ellis  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 119  
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Sen. Ellis,

I'm writing on behalf of families served by Stone Soup Group to thank you for your leadership in sponsoring Senate Bill 74, the Autism Insurance Reform Bill. Stone Soup Group is a nonprofit agency that provides support services to families caring for children and youth with special health care needs and disabilities. With the increased incidents of autism and related disorders in the past decade, Stone Soup Group has grappled with how to assist families in accessing therapeutic interventions not covered by private insurance programs. The ability to use private insurance to access those services opens doors for thousands of families.

Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder and is the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the U.S. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that one in every 110 children, with one in every 70 boys are diagnosed annually. These children require extensive services from medical professionals. Early intervention is critical to gain maximum benefit from existing therapies. Most private health insurance plans do not provide coverage for Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and other autism-related services.

Stone Soup Group fully supports Senate Bill 74 and the companion House Bill 79 sponsored by Rep. Petersen. Thank you for all of your hard work for Alaska's families.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Donnelly". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kelly Donnelly  
Executive Director