Autism Spectrum Disorders In Texas
Capacity Building Through Collective Impact and Partnerships
Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is a complex developmental disability with signs appearing in early childhood. Autism impairs a person’s ability to communicate and interact with others.
Behaviors Associated with Autism

- Delayed language development
- Difficulty making eye contact
- Difficulty holding conversations
- Difficulty with executive functioning
- Narrow or intense interests
- Sensory sensitivities
Magnitude of the Problem

According to the CDC 1 in 68 children are being diagnosed with autism.

There is no known single cause of autism.

Autism is not curable. Autism is treatable.

The socioeconomic impact is costly.
Costs of Autism to the US

- In 2013 the US cost was estimated at $137 billion per year
- In 2014, est. US cost for children ranged between $61 and $66 billion, while the costs for adults ranged between $175 and $196 billion. That's a total cost of $236 to $262 billion.

Cost of Autism to the U.S.

According to Autism Speaks, 2015 costs are estimated to be $268 billion.
These Costs Span Many Different Sectors

- Health
- Education
- Social Care
- Housing
- Employment
- Government Benefits
- Labor Markets
Costs of Autism to the U.S.

In 2014, it was estimated that over 3.5 million individuals in the U.S. are on the spectrum. Over 2.5 million of those are over the age of 18.

Industry saying: “A child with autism grows up to be an adult with autism.”

And we spend more years being an adult than a child.

The HHSC Center for Strategic Decision Support estimated in 2014 that 399,915 Texans have ASD diagnosis, including 130,316 children below the age of 22.

The lifetime cost of supporting a person with ASD is estimated to be $1.4 million. ASD with ID, total rises to $2.4 million.

Autism Facts

- ASD affects 1 in 68 children
- ASD is 5x more common in boys than girls (1 in 42 boys vs. 1 in 189 girls)
- ASD costs a family $60,000/year on average
- 40% of people with ASD have average to above average intellectual abilities
- ASD receives less than 5% of the National Institutes of Health research funding
- ASD occurs in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.

Source: The Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Source: The Texas Council of Autism & Pervasive Disorders 2014 Report
Cost of Autism: Projected

- Costs to the U.S. for autism are projected to rise to $461 billion in 2025 if prevalence remains at today’s 1 in 68 rate
- If autism’s prevalence continues to increase beyond 1 in 68, the projected costs will top $1 trillion by 2025

What Can We Do?

Although, there is no known cure… Autism is treatable.
Early Intervention is Key

Early diagnostics (18-24 months) and early treatment before the age of 5 can have a 40% likelihood the child can enter kindergarten without specialized education.
Evidence-based Intervention

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is the evidence-based and research supported treatment for autism.
For toddlers receiving early evidenced based treatment, such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) before age 5, this can dramatically increase their ability to learn to talk, attend to instruction, play with others and get along in their social structures along with their typically developing peers.
Early intervention, specifically ABA, can reduce the likelihood of needing specialized education by 40% by the time the child enters kindergarten. This can save public schools more than $10,000 per child per year.

Autism Lifeline Links

Six founding organizations came together to make a difference. We recognized the importance of this issue and the potential economic impact so we formed the coalition.
Imagine a collective of community agencies working together to improve the quality of the life for your loved one with autism.

We did.
Key Areas Collective Impact: ALL aims to address

Understand the scope of the need and the gaps in services around autism in our area
Study current supply and demand for professionals serving individuals with ASD
What will it take to meet the need: early intervention and seamless services in our city
Creating a “no wrong door” system for families who struggle navigating the system (TAV Connect)
One of the first initiatives of the Autism Lifeline Links Coalition was to quantify the scope of the impact for the San Antonio Community.

Kronkosky Charitable Foundation took the lead to identify the true numbers in Bexar County with the goal of maximizing efficiency, reducing redundancies, creating greater availability and accessibility and to make it easier for families to identify and access services.
Problems Meeting the Need

No. of BCBAs in Texas vs. No. of children needing ABA

1061 BCBA’s & 78 BCBA-D’s in Texas (1139) for 130,316 children w/ASD ages 3-22 in Texas

Ethically, BCBA’s have 12-15 cases at one time on their caseload

130,316/12=10,860 caseloads

(BCBAs)1139 (Caseload) 10,860 so to meet every child today, we need over 9,000 more BCBAs in Texas
Problems Meeting the Need

No. of BCBAs in San Antonio vs. No. of children needing ABA

81 BCBA’s & 5 BCBA-D’s in San Antonio (86) for
5,610 children ages 3-22 in San Antonio

Ethically, BCBA’s have 12-15 cases at one time on their caseload
5,610/12 = 467 caseloads

(BCBAs) 86 (Caseload) 467 so to meet every child today, we need over 350 more BCBAs in San Antonio
Meeting the Need for State Supported ABA in San Antonio

Autism Treatment Center in SA has the HHSC Children’s Autism Program Grant (Previously DARS Autism Project)

The wait list for this program is **over 2 years** long and currently has over **600 children on the list**. 359 have submitted proof of dx 3-15. **282 are under the age of 5**. Just to meet the need for kids under 5, we need **23 more BCBAs at ATC**.
The Cost to Schools for the ASD Population

- Average cost/student in Texas is $9,500 for regular education and $18,000 for special education
- Just in Bexar County alone (San Antonio), the is nearly $4 million in additional costs for the 2015 school year to serve 3,871 children diagnosed with ASD.
- The number of children diagnosed with ASD in Region 20 (SA) increased 287% from 1,708 in 2007 to $4,905 in 2015
- This is an increase in additional costs to local school districts for ASD special education in the last 8 years from $17 million to $50 million per school year.

Source: disabilityscoop.com quoting federal government’s Medical Expenditure Panel Surve and National Health Interview Survey (Feb. 10, 2014)

Source: Dallas Morning News quoting figures compiled by Texas Education Agency (March 18, 2015)
Collective Impact and Partnerships are Formed

Partnership between Children’s Hospital of San Antonio, Autism Treatment Center, and University of Texas San Antonio was developed to create seamless service delivery and to retain professionals entering the field to build capacity and reduce a child’s wait time to access services.
We are currently creating a strategic plan to address the current and growing need for early intervention ABA. We aim to:

- Reduce the time families wait to receive diagnosis
- Reduce and eliminate wait lists for ABA
- Increase capacity by increasing the number of BCBAs and retain them in San Antonio through UTSA’s graduate program
Power of Partnership

CHofSA, UTSA, & ATC bring forward endless possibilities...this is just the beginning!

Medical  Biological  Environmental

All In ONE Place
Power of Partnership

Diagnostics
Research (Medical & Behavioral)
Medical Support
Medical Student and Professional Training Center
Treating patients on site
Mason – father is a police officer. He came to us with no language….was silent and seemed to not be paying attention….
Making a Difference

Meet Eli

Picture credit: Leslie Neely
From Eli’s Mom: “In one word, [ABA means] hope for our family. ABA has taught our son how to communicate, connect, and learn…the skills we learn through ABA positively impact every aspect of life”
Closing Thoughts

- It took the trust and leadership of 6 founding organizations.
- Getting competitive together towards helping our community get the services they need. Getting away from working in silos.