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February 7, 2018

Representative Steve Lebsock
200 E. Colfax Room 307
Denver, CO 80203

RE: HB18-1223 Declare Autism Epidemic in Colorado

Dear Representative Lebsock and members of the Colorado General Assembly,

Alpine Autism Center strongly endorses HB18-1223 and requests this legislation be passed as a first step in addressing the many issues affecting Colorado families impacted by autism. As a non-profit service provider to individuals with autism since 2005, we have seen the incidence and prevalence of autism skyrocket in our community.

We have a waiting list of over 100 clients and their families who cannot access appropriate treatment. This is due to misaligned, inefficient, and poorly coordinated resources at the federal and state level for this disorder. We believe a root cause of the strained resources is the failure to properly understand and identify the number of individuals affected by autism across our State.

Collecting and reviewing the autism data from 1990 to 2017 from every Colorado county and across all age groups will provide the needed facts and data to declare an Autism Epidemic. Then the hard work can begin to better support our communities by addressing the many issues affecting this population. These include appropriate/updated Medicaid waiver criteria specific to autism, innovative/effective special education programs, coordination and optimization of funding sources (public education, private insurance, Medicaid), development and implementation of adult services (currently non-existent), appropriate long term care and home health services, and innovative residential and vocational solutions to meet the needs of this growing population.

With the proper interventions and supports, individuals with autism and their families can participate in our economy and contribute to our strong communities. Thank you for your consideration and action on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie A. Cook".

Julie A. Cook
President

The Alpine Autism Center is a nonprofit organization
under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code
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