



# The Autism Program

AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER

Boston Medical Center  
850 Harrison Ave.-Yawkey 6  
Boston, MA 02118  
[www.bmc.org/pediatrics-autism-program](http://www.bmc.org/pediatrics-autism-program)

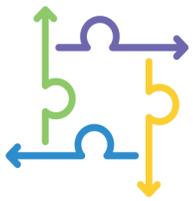
## 2017 Program Highlights



The Autism Program at BMC assists and empowers those affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders through direct patient support, provider education, and community outreach in a culturally competent manner by offering high quality and comprehensive care to all.

### Our Team

Shari King, Program Director  
Lauren Busa, Program Manager  
Paula Cardoso, Autism Family Navigator  
Simone Dufresne, Transition Navigator  
Liz Ferriero, Autism Resource Specialist  
Sarah Qin, Project Coordinator, Autism Friendly Initiative



**AUTISM FRIENDLY INITIATIVE**  
at Boston Medical Center

The Autism Friendly Initiative at BMC aims to improve the hospital experience for patients with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). This initiative is a coordinated effort involving stakeholders from departments all across the hospital, as well as patient families. Through this initiative, we aim to address the unique needs of patients with ASD through staff training, environmental adaptation, and protocol adjustment at every level of the hospital.

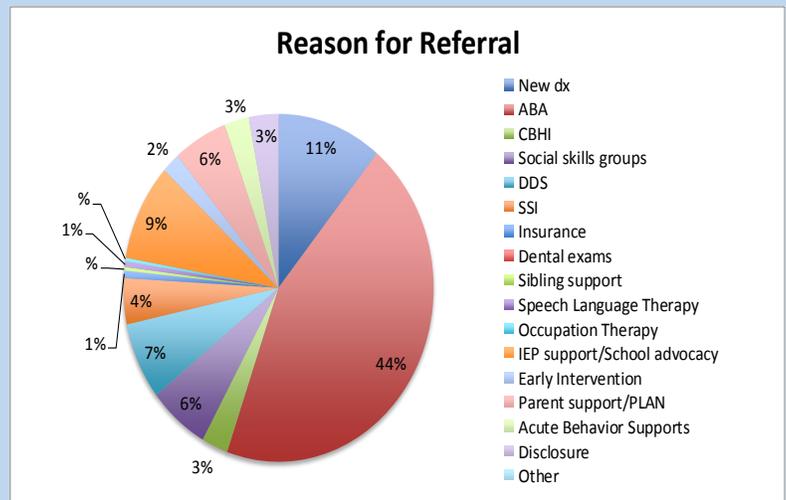
To date we have completed an initial needs assessment and are in the process of conducting further research to better understand the challenges faced by patients with autism. We are also in the process of developing and piloting interventions including a sensory toolbox, innovative app, as well as staff trainings. Our interventions aim to address the challenges faced by patients with autism around the areas of gaps in knowledge, patient's sensory needs and communication challenges.

*Sarah Qin joined the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center in 2017 as the Project Coordinator for the Autism Friendly Hospital Initiative. With an undergrad degree in Social and Cognitive Neuroscience from Harvard and an MBA from BU Questrom School of Business, she leverages her background in healthcare and education to coordinate hospital-wide efforts to improve the hospital experience for patients with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).*



## 2017 Patient Care Numbers

- **Total Referrals: 600 families** Topics covered included: *accessing in-home ABA services, social skills groups, special education, insurance coverage, public benefits*
- **Transition Referrals: 86 families** Topics covered: *school services, independence and life skills, guardianship, adult service agencies, government benefits, and employment*
- **Family Navigation: 44 families** Topics covered: *IEP support, applying for SSI and DDS services, housing, immigration, accessing in-home services*



*Striving to help and strengthen every family in need.*

**Teens Engaged as Mentors (TEAM)** completed its 2nd year in 2017 with 32 mentors and mentees. Monthly community service and/or recreational events included trail clean-up at the Mass Audubon, trips to the Museum of Science and bowling. Read some thoughts from our end-of-year focus groups:

*"Before I started [TEAM] I didn't really help a lot of people...[now] I think I've been trying to help a lot more...and I've started to volunteer in another program too...I even went to the food bank...and volunteered there."* -Mentor

*"I...like [that] you don't feel like an outsider but you feel like you have people to relate to. I guess...you feel like you're not the only one."* -Mentee

*"[I wanted my son to participate because] it was another step in him developing his own...self-identity, self-esteem, to realize 'Wait, I can be an asset to someone else' – it's not just 'Oh I'm different'."* -Parent



# IMFAR

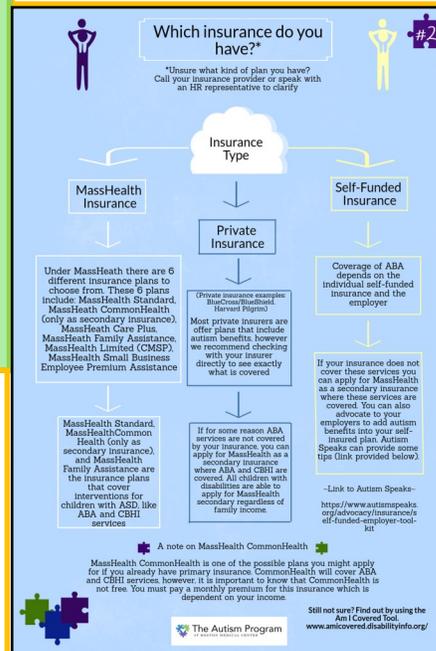
## INTERNATIONAL MEETING FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

At the 2017 International Meeting for Autism Research in California, the ASD Program presented a poster titled **"Teens Engaged as Mentors: An Evaluative Study of Program Impact"**.

The conference had nearly 2000 attendees, including physicians, researchers, educators, and health professionals.

### Resource Innovation

Resources are constantly being added to our website. New this year is our comprehensive Insurance Guide, 2017 Summer Guide and many more social stories and visuals.

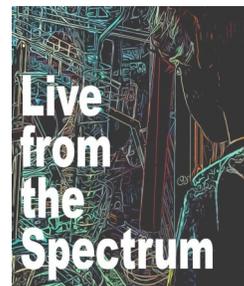


**The Parent Leadership in Autism Network (PLAN)** entered its 5th year with continued growth and expansion and is comprised of thirty parent leaders who speak **English, Spanish, Cape Verdean Creole, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Arabic, French, Tagalog, Swahili and Kikuyu.**



**"The best info and support comes from peers who have gone through a similar situation"**

### New to PLAN this year is our PODCAST!



Live from the spectrum: Real Talk. Real Life. Raising kids on the autism spectrum

*Live from the Spectrum offers a raw and uncensored look into the world of families living with ASD, with each episode offering real insight on topics such as labels and terminology, inclusion, managing behaviors, and family dynamics.*

**Find us in iTunes or any podcast app.**

The needs of low-income children affected by ASD are vast and variable and yet critical support like that which is provided by Autism Specialists is neither billable nor reimbursable through insurance companies. The Autism Program thus relies on philanthropic support to maintain its functioning, continued growth, and success.



JE & ZB Butler Foundation  
Kames/Gaffney Family

The Delori Family  
Bain Capital Children's Charity

The Horner Family Foundation  
The Flatley Foundation