



Background:

The Autism Alliance of Michigan (AAoM) is a non-profit, statewide autism advocacy, education, and service based organization working on behalf of families navigating services and supports for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). While AAoM has a number of important statewide initiatives, one of its targeted programs is education and training to professionals who interface with individuals with ASD in both intended and unintended situations, such as hospital primary and specialty departments.

AAoM has made significant progress in coordinating training opportunities to further educate in autism across professions in the areas of autism characteristics, supports, and interventions. This includes partnering with state-based and national collaborators in providing training for law enforcement; fire, rescue, EMS/emergency responders; educators; public support systems (CMH); health care, transportation agents, community agencies and businesses. AAoM serves as a consultant organization to a number of agencies and providers interfacing with individuals with autism.

Autism Spectrum Disorder:

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a lifelong, neurodevelopmental disability. The incidence is now estimated to be 1:68 (CDC 2014) with approximately 16,591 children being educationally assessed with the condition in Michigan public schools (MDE 2012). It impacts individuals across all environments including school, home, medical, public, justice system, and any particular setting in which the individual happens to navigating.

Highlights of AAoM Autism Training

- Over 14,000 participants in law enforcement, fire/rescue, EMS, state and national transportation organizations, educators and school districts, Michigan Department of Community Health Boards, communities, parks and recreation, universities, other professional organizations have been trained in AAoM safety/awareness presentations. These include;
 - MI chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
 - National Association of Government Entity Programs Education Conference
 - Michigan State Police Academy: On-going Training Sessions Statewide
 - Endorsements from the Michigan Sheriff's Association and Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority
 - Training is MCOLES Certified for Law Enforcement (continuing education credits)
 - Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Partnership: Developed and Delivered Behavioral Strategies Training Modules for MDCH
 - Provided Consultation and Developed Evidence-Based Support Modules for Businesses in Michigan including: The Henry Ford Greenfield Village; Detroit Metropolitan Airport, Wayne

Proposed Aspects of Training: Mott Children’s Hospital for Individuals with Autism

To educate pediatric specialty and primary care staff, training in both autism spectrum disorder and evidence based treatments and strategies for mediating behaviors is proposed. The following outlines potential modules. These can be tailored to accommodate audience, time constraints, and specific needs of any hospital unit.

- Overview of ASD, prevalence, characteristics, diagnostic challenges due to complexity of the disorder and heterogeneous nature of disability
- How individuals with autism respond to communication and interact with their environment
- Sensory issues with the ASD population
- Behavior triggers and challenges in diffusing behaviors
- Evidence Based Practice: mediating behaviors, use of visuals, and antecedent interventions
- Supports that benefit the ASD population, and neuro-typical children
- Partner with existing staff to deliver training to ensure environmental needs are met

A portion of the training is spent discussing how to set up environments that are most conducive to the ASD population, aiding in anticipating and mediating behaviors that do occur. These protocols are based on basic behavioral principles, communication interventions and social strategies for establishing the most successful interactions with this population.