

Sample Formal Request for Timely Access to an autism diagnostic evaluation, Medi-Cal

<Your Address>

<Address of Medical Group>

Date:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of my child, _____(name) (DOB, Health Plan id #). _____ is a member of _____ medical group, and is a patient of Dr _____ (primary care doctor). Dr. XXX suspects my child may have autism spectrum disorder and has referred (him or her) to be evaluated. Because of the long waiting period for assessments with existing providers contracted with Medi-Cal, I am formally requesting a single case agreement with a non-contracted provider so that my child may receive timely access to care.

The three facilities that Medi-Cal contracts with to perform autism evaluations (Lucille Packard Children's Hospital, Children's Health Council and Kidscope (or name those in your area) each have a minimum six month waiting period.

Under the Knox Keene Act, AB 2179 and DMHC Rule 1300.67.2.2, my child is entitled to timely access to care. According to the regulation, this requires my child be offered an appointment with a specialist "within 15 business days of a request." (http://www.dmhc.ca.gov/healthplans/gen/gen_timelyacc.aspx) It is the health plan's responsibility under the law to maintain adequate networks so that patients may receive the legally defined timely access to care. If these networks do not exist, the health plan must make a single case agreement.

It is critical that my child be evaluated for autism in a timely manner. If he/she does have autism, his/her prognosis for improvement hinges dramatically on early intervention. Most experts agree that it is important to identify children with developmental delays or disorders as early as possible. Numerous studies have shown that intervention at earlier stages in a child's development reduces the short-term and long-term negative consequences of these disorders:

- Guralnick, M. J. (1998). The effectiveness of early intervention for vulnerable children: A developmental perspective. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 102, 319–345.
- Rogers SJ, Vismara LA.: Evidence-based comprehensive treatments for early autism. *J Clin Child Adolesc Psychol*. 2008;37:8-38..
- Eikeseth S, Smith T, Jahr E, et al.: Outcome for children with autism who began intensive behavioral treatment between ages 4 and 7: a comparison controlled study. *Behav Modif*. 2007;31:264-278

- Spreckley, M and Boyd, R.: Efficacy of applied behavioral intervention in preschool By denying my child to timely access to care, (name of health plan) is hindering his/her rights to receive medically necessary treatment.

I have identified the following three medical professionals who are experience in performing autism assessments and can see my child much sooner than what is available within the plan /have availability to schedule within fifteen business days, as is my right under the law. (List names, license numbers, and contact info of professionals) I am requesting an immediate single case agreement with one of these professionals so that I may exercise my child's legal right to timely access to care. Please know that I am simultaneously filing this grievance and request for a single case agreement with the Department of Managed Health Care, to ensure that my child's legal rights are met.

I am formally requesting a single case agreement for my child to be assessed for autism, and am requesting a prompt response.

I thank you in advance for responding.

Sincerely,

Your name

Address

Phone numbers

email