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**California Association of Health Plans
Recognizes World Autism Awareness Day
By Highlighting Medical Services Plans Provide**

SACRAMENTO – The California Association of Health Plans (CAHP) is joining other organizations today in recognizing World Autism Awareness Day by increasing awareness about the wide array of health care services its members provide for autism.

“California health plans understand the inherent challenges facing parents of children with developmental disabilities and mental health conditions,” said CAHP Interim President Charles Bacchi. “Health plans provide extensive medical and mental health coverage for members with autism and their families every single day.”

Autism Spectrum Disorders are developmental disabilities that can impair a person’s ability to communicate and relate to others. The thinking and learning abilities of people with autism can vary greatly – ranging from gifted to severely challenged.

California health plans provide comprehensive coverage for autism-related medical services including:

- Evaluation and assessment of autism
- Medication
- Speech therapy
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Rehabilitative therapy
- Psychotherapy for the individual
- Psychotherapy for the family

California has a clearly defined system of medical and educational services for autism provided by a partnership of the state’s health plans, public schools and state-funded local providers, known as regional centers. Health plans provide health care coverage for individuals with autism and their families, while public schools are responsible for providing educational services to students with autism. Regional centers provide assessments, as well as evaluations, and coordinate a variety of educational services and everyday life skills training for individuals with autism and their families.

“Our hearts go out to Californians who are caring for those with developmental disabilities and mental health conditions,” Bacchi said. “California health plans are working hard to keep them and all Californians healthy by providing high-quality, affordable and accessible coverage to more than 24 million people in the state.”

On December 18, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 62/139, which declares April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day.

Additional detail regarding how services for autism are provided in California [can be found on CAHP's website](#).

CAHP is a statewide trade association representing 39 full-service health plans. Through legislative advocacy, education and collaboration with other member organizations, CAHP works to sustain a strong environment in which our member plans can provide access to products that offer choice and flexibility to the more than 24 million members they serve. For more information, please visit www.calhealthplans.org or call (916) 552-2910.

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