

Strengthening oversight of autism programs

Minnesota can create a system that promotes the well-being of participants, fosters trust among families, and supports providers who are committed to delivering high-quality care.

Challenge

Minnesota’s Medicaid benefit for children with autism spectrum disorder – called Early Intensive Developmental and Behavioral Intervention, or EIDBI – has been an unlicensed service since its inception in 2014. The number of EIDBI providers has grown rapidly. Increased autism diagnoses have led to a growing need for support from children and their families.

Rapid growth has exposed critical challenges. Some staff at new EIDBI provider agencies do not meet training requirements, leading to health and safety incidents. Program integrity is a concern.

Predatory businesses and those that cheat the system endanger the health and well-being of children and their families while casting an unfair shadow on the many providers who follow the rules. Immediate action is needed to strengthen oversight, ensure accountability and safeguard the integrity of services that play a transformative role in the lives of children with autism.

Proposal

The Governor’s budget establishes a provisional license requirement for EIDBI providers as a short-term step to increase oversight until robust licensing standards are developed with community input. The state will have authority to investigate maltreatment allegations in EIDBI settings.

The proposal will require EIDBI providers to re-validate their Medicaid enrollment every three years, instead of every five years. Tightened standards will ensure a background study is completed before an individual is allowed to start work. New state staff will help support these efforts.

Why It's Important

These changes are crucial for the health and safety of children. The proposal will also help prevent fraud, waste and abuse by giving the Department of Human Services more oversight and regulatory tools. By addressing these challenges, Minnesota can create a system that promotes the well-being of participants, fosters trust among families, and supports providers committed to delivering high-quality care.

Without licensing authority, the state has limited ability to identify program integrity issues proactively. Providers – including EIDBI providers – are required to enroll with DHS to bill Medicaid. However, licensed providers face more rigorous operational oversight than enrolled providers. In unlicensed settings, DHS is unable to set and monitor critical health and safety requirements. Licensure will also give the state clear authority to investigate maltreatment.

Currently, people can enroll and provide EIDBI services while their background studies are still being processed. Requiring a completed background study before an employee starts work will ensure that the state has an accurate list of staff who are authorized to provide services in a healthy and safe environment.

The budget recommendation dedicates new resources to provisionally license around 400 existing EIDBI agencies, investigate maltreatment allegations, enhance oversight and increase the frequency of re-validation. This will include new staff for licensing, background studies, data analytics, policy, and provider enrollment.

For More Information

[EIDBI Provisional Licensure and Program Integrity](#)
[Governor's Revised Budget Recommendations for Human Services](#)