

DOVER POST

Autism Delaware to expand services to underserved Latino community

By Submitted News

Posted Jul 8, 2019 at 5:15 PM

Updated Jul 8, 2019 at 5:30 PM

Autism Delaware is expanding its outreach into northern and central Delaware's Latino community with an innovative, community-based program called the Autism Care Team Program, due to a recent grant from the Arsht-Cannon Foundation.

The program seeks to close the gap in supports for autism between those received by Spanish-speaking families and the rest of the state's population. Hispanic families tend to experience delays in accessing services due to significant barriers, including language and immigration status.

Research has proven that the sooner an individual or family affected by autism receives support, the better the long-term outcomes. Yet, statistics show that Spanish-speaking families remain grossly underrepresented and undersupported by service providers.

In the past two years, Autism Delaware has experienced a great increase in the demand for family navigation services overall, most significantly among Spanish-speaking families. The Arsht-Cannon grant enables the agency to meet this demand with innovative approaches such as the ACT Program, which is based on a family peer support services model, an evidence-based, face-to-face intervention that can be recommended by a psychologist, physician, nurse practitioner, licensed behavioral health practitioner or other support professional. Families may also be referred by Child Development Watch, Swank Autism Center at the Al DuPont Hospital for Children and local agencies that serve Latino families.

Families may also self-refer.

Autism Delaware's certified bilingual family support providers can offer Spanish-

speaking families services through individual and group contact in various settings, including community locations where the family lives, works, attends school, engages in services or participates in social activities. Services can also be provided remotely through telehealth methods.

Autism Delaware will hire an additional bilingual family support provider who will go into the Latino community and meet with families in environments that are familiar to them.

Spanish-speaking individuals seeking support for a loved one with autism can call the agency at 224-6020.

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