

Genetic Centers of America Launches Landmark, National Autism Evaluation and Treatment Program

Press Release

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Contact:

The Genetic Centers of America
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WASHINGTON, DC – Newly published clinical practice guidelines in the journal of *Genetics in Medicine*,¹ the official journal of the American Medical Association recognized board of the American College of Medical Genetics, recommends the routine evaluation and management of all patients diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) by clinical geneticists. In response, the Genetic Centers of America has launched a landmark, national outreach program to provide clinical genetic services to the underserved population of persons diagnosed with an ASD.

ASDs are a collection of symptoms, characterized by impaired socialization and communication in association with stereotypic behaviors. The reported incidence of ASDs has increased markedly over the past decade. In addition, lay and professional groups have paid great attention to ASDs. These circumstances have resulted in a marked increase in referrals to clinical geneticists for evaluation of persons with ASDs.

According to the newly published practice guidelines from the American College of Medical Genetics, “The primary role of the geneticist in this process is to define etiology, if possible, and to provide counseling and contribute to case management based on the results of such investigations.”

Further, these practice guidelines recommend that the clinical geneticist should confirm the diagnosis, fully disclose the potential benefits and drawbacks of any treatment with the patient/guardians, communicate with the medical community serving the patient, consider emerging treatments in light of evidence based medicine, elucidate the biological syndromes related to autism spectrum disorders, and plan a course of treatment based upon the particularities of a patient and their medical history.

In response to these new guidelines, Dr. Mark Geier, President of The Genetic Centers of America and a founding fellow of the American College of Medical Genetics, has stated, “The new guidelines are a godsend to parents of children with an ASD diagnosis. For the first time, an American Medical Association certified board has formally recommended that all patients diagnosed with an ASD be seen and fully worked-up by a geneticist. These guidelines should make it very difficult for any health plan or physician to deny children on the spectrum the full medical care to which they are entitled.”

The Genetic Centers of America, specializing in the management of genetic evaluations for more than 28 years, presently has one of the nation’s largest private clinical genetics practices offering management and treatment of patients diagnosed with an ASD. Further, the Genetic Centers of America, working in collaboration with the non-profit 501(C)3 Institute of Chronic Illnesses, has contributed to more than 20 recent peer-reviewed studies helping to define the etiology and management of ASD in a patient population.

For more information about how to schedule a genetic consultation with the Genetic Centers of America for a loved one who has been diagnosed with an ASD, please call (301)989-0548.

To financially support research conducted by the Institute of Chronic Illnesses, Inc. on the etiology and management of patients diagnosed with an ASD, please send your tax-deductible contributions to: The Institute of Chronic Illnesses, 14

¹ Schaefer GB, Mendelsohn NJ; Professional Practice and Guidelines Committee. Clinical genetics evaluation in identifying the etiology of autism spectrum disorders. *Genet Med.* 2008 Apr;10(4):301-5.

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Redgate Ct., Silver Spring, MD 20905. The Institute of Chronic Illnesses, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501(C)(3) corporation actively engaged in the scientific study of the basis of human chronic diseases, with a special emphasis on autism spectrum disorders.