



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

August 3, 2006

S. 843

Combating Autism Act of 2006

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
on July 19, 2006*

SUMMARY

S. 843 would amend the Public Health Service Act to modify and expand research, surveillance, and education activities related to autism conducted by various agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Those activities are conducted by the National Institutes for Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

The bill would authorize appropriations for autism activities at HHS of \$147 million in 2007 and about \$1 billion over the 2007-2011 period. This bill would replace an existing authorization of such sums as necessary for those activities with specified authorization levels for most of the activities. On balance, CBO estimates that authorizations for autism activities would increase by \$7 million in 2007 and by \$300 million over the 2007-2011 period. Assuming appropriation of the estimated amounts, CBO estimates that implementing S. 843 would cost \$4 million in 2007 and \$209 million over the 2007-2011 period (relative to estimated spending under the current-law authorization). S. 843 would not affect direct spending or receipts.

State, local, and tribal governments would be eligible to receive funds from grants authorized by the bill for programs that increase awareness and research about autism and related disorders. Any requirements on recipients of those grants would be conditions of federal assistance and not intergovernmental mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). CBO expects that other requirements on states, particularly those requiring governors to identify lead agencies for coordinating information about autism resources, also would be conditions of assistance related to a variety of grant programs that provide funding for autism programs. The bill contains no private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 843 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 550 (health).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Spending Under Current Law						
Estimated Authorization Level ^a	137	140	143	145	149	151
Estimated Outlays	135	136	138	141	143	146
Proposed Changes						
Estimated Authorization Level	0	7	32	56	90	115
Estimated Outlays	0	4	16	35	63	91
Spending Under S. 843						
Estimated Authorization Level	137	147	175	201	239	266
Estimated Outlays	135	140	154	176	206	237

a. The 2006 level is the amount appropriated for that year for HHS activities related to autism. The amounts shown for 2007 through 2011 are CBO baseline projections that reflect the 2006 level adjusted for anticipated inflation. Current law authorizes the appropriation of such sums as may be necessary for those years.

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

In 2006, \$137 million was appropriated to NIH, HRSA, and the CDC for activities related to prevent, diagnose, and treat autism. CBO estimates that S. 843 would authorize the appropriation for similar activities of \$147 million for 2007 and \$1 billion over the 2007-2011 period. Those amounts are \$6 million and \$300 million higher, respectively, than the amounts appropriated for 2006 adjusted for inflation. (Current law authorizes the appropriation of such sums as may be necessary for HHS autism activities. Thus, the amounts shown as "Proposed Changes" in the table are the net increases relative to the inflation-adjusted figures for current law.) Based on historical spending patterns, and assuming appropriation of estimated amounts, we estimate that those changes would cost \$4 million in 2007 and \$209 million over the 2007-2011 period.

The National Institutes for Health currently operates several research centers of excellence on autism, as authorized by the Children's Health Act of 2000. In addition, the NIH supports genetic, neurological, and environmental research into the causes of autism through the

nationwide Collaborative Programs of Excellence in Autism research network. The bill would expand and modify the authorized activities of those programs, require the Director of the NIH to encourage collaboration among the centers for excellence, and allow consolidation of redundant activities. In 2006, \$102 million was appropriated for these activities either specifically or out of funds subject to the discretion of the Director. For those activities, S. 843 would authorize the appropriation of \$100 million for 2007 and \$741 million over the 2007-2011 period.

The Health Resources and Services Administration currently operates several programs to train health care providers in the delivery of care to children with autism and other developmental disabilities. S. 843 would direct the Secretary of HHS to continue such activities and to expand efforts to detect and treat autism, and to fund research on interventions to diagnose and treat autistic children at younger ages. In particular, the bill would direct the Secretary to work with the Departments of Agriculture and Education to share educational tools and literature with providers of services who might come into contact with autistic children. In 2006, \$20 million of appropriated funds was allocated for activities similar to those described in S. 843. For those activities, the bill would authorize the appropriation of \$32 million in 2007 and \$210 million over the 2007-2011 period.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently administers several surveillance and research programs directed against autism, including the Centers for Autism and Developmental Disability Research and Epidemiology. In addition, the CDC also operates an autism education program that aims to improve the ability of health care providers to diagnose autism. In 2006, \$15 million of appropriated funds was allocated for activities similar to those described by S. 843. For those activities, S. 843 would authorize the appropriation of \$15 million for 2007 and for such sums as necessary for 2008 through 2011.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

State, local, and tribal governments would be eligible to receive funds from grants authorized by the bill for programs that increase awareness and research about autism and related disorders. Any requirements on recipients of those grants would be conditions of federal assistance and not intergovernmental mandates as defined in UMRA. CBO expects that other requirements on states, particularly those requiring governors to identify lead agencies for coordinating information about autism resources, also would be conditions of assistance related to a variety of grant programs that provide funding for autism programs. The bill contains no private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA.

ESTIMATE PREPARED BY:

Federal Costs: Tim Gronniger, Sarah Evans, and Camile Williams
Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Leo Lex
Impact on the Private Sector: Paige Shevlin

ESTIMATE APPROVED BY:

Peter H. Fontaine
Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis