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Press Release

The Autism Society of America – Greater Phoenix Chapter (ASA-GPC) Joins With Autism Support Groups and Organizations for a Candlelight Vigil at the Arizona State Capitol in Support of Legislation to Require Insurance Companies to Provide Coverage for Proven Autism Treatments on January 29, 2008 at 6 PM.

PHOENIX, AZ (January 17, 2008) — The Autism Society of America – Greater Phoenix Chapter joins with local autism support groups including ROK, S.A.N.E., Asperger Parent Network, HelpASAP, Arizona Autism Support, Northern Arizona ASA, ASA-Pima County Chapter and organizations including the Autism Society of America, Arizona Autism Coalition, SARRC and ACT Today! Arizona Chapter to hold an Autism Insurance Candlelight Vigil at the Arizona State Capitol on January 29, 2008 at 6:00 PM.

When the Legislature commences in January, it will consider legislation to require insurance companies to cover medically necessary autism treatment. The bill would create a new “Autism Spectrum Disorders Coverage” provision of the Arizona insurance law. This provision would require private insurers to provide coverage for essential early intervention services and therapies for individuals with autism, including “behavioral interventions based on the principles of applied behavioral analysis (ABA).” ABA therapy for children with autism is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Academy of Sciences, the US Surgeon General, and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

Many states have already passed legislation and several have legislation pending to require health insurance carriers to cover essential autism treatments. In the absence of coverage and understanding the importance of early intervention, families often pay as much as they are able for treatment that can cost upwards of \$50,000 per year, often risking their homes and futures. This legislation will go a long way toward ensuring that children have access to early intervention in order to substantially enhance their quality of life. AUTISM is TREATABLE.

To find out more about this legislation and the candlelight vigil, visit www.azautisminsurance.org or email: info@azautisminsurance.org.

ABOUT AUTISM

Autism is a complex brain disorder that inhibits a person's ability to communicate and develop social relationships, and is often accompanied by extreme behavioral challenges. A 2007 Centers for Disease Control report found that 1 in 150 children in America today have an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). ASA estimates that 1.5 million Americans and their families are now affected. Autism is a national health crisis, costing the U.S. at least \$35 billion annually.

ABOUT AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA – GREATER PHOENIX CHAPTER

The Autism Society of America – Greater Phoenix Chapter (ASA-GPC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the welfare of children and adults with autism and related disorders. ASA-GPC provides information, resources, and support to families affected by autism in Arizona and helps families who have just received the autism diagnosis by providing information on effective treatments. To learn more about ASA-GPC and our partners, including ROK, S.A.N.E. and Asperger Parent Network, please visit www.phxautism.org.