Recommended Autism Training and Continued Education

As part of the 2025 General Assembly Session and enactment of Virginia Code § 54.1-2409.6 the Department of Health Professions recommends that all licensed healthcare providers pursue continued education and training in working with children on the autism spectrum.

These children often face unique challenges in healthcare settings, including sensory sensitivities, communication barriers, and anxiety related to unfamiliar environments. As healthcare professionals, your ability to recognize, understand, and accommodate these needs can significantly improve health outcomes and patient experiences.

We recommend the following resources and training opportunities:

- **Autism Society of Central Virginia** offers a free *Introduction to Autism Overview Training* tailored for Virginia-licensed healthcare professionals. This training focuses on communication strategies and sensory-friendly practices, including characteristics of autism in children. Request access at ascv.org/continuing-education-autism-training.
- **Organization for Autism Research (OAR)** provides a comprehensive *Healthcare Toolkit for Providers*, which includes best practices and customizable tools to support autistic patients before, during, and after appointments. Access the toolkit at researchautism.org/healthcaretoolkit.
- **Cleveland Clinic Foundation Center for Continuing Education** discusses how healthcare practitioners can interact and improve encounters with ASD patients in a clinical setting. *Providing Compassionate Care for Individuals with ASD* is an interview with autism advocate, author, and college professor Dr. Temple Grandin at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glBq4h5hLtA.

By investing in your knowledge and skills in this area, you help build a more inclusive and responsive healthcare system for Virginia's children and families. We thank you for your dedication to professional excellence and patient-centered care.