



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

March 23, 2011

Thomas R. Insel, M.D.
Chair, Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee
Director, National Institute of Mental Health
National Institutes of Health
Building 15K, Room 107
North Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Insel:

I am writing to extend my sincere appreciation to you and the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee for your work related to autism spectrum disorder and your suggestions for changes to federal activities the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) may want to consider in accordance with the Combating Autism Act of 2006.

I also would like to thank you for providing background information on how the issue of autism-related wandering/elopement is affecting the autism community and for your recommendations on this issue. I understand the Committee has already taken action to encourage research on wandering behavior by including this issue in the research objectives in the *2011 IACC Strategic Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorder Research*, and also understand that the issue of medical coding for autism-related wandering is currently under consideration by the International Classification of Diseases Coordinating and Maintenance Committee, with final decisions expected later this year.

Please know that HHS appreciates the effort put forth by this Committee and will give serious consideration to the recommendations communicated in the Committee's advisory letter. On behalf of the Department, I thank you and the Committee for your dedication and commitment to enhancing and accelerating federal and community efforts to improve the health and well-being of people with autism spectrum disorder.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Sebelius