



A public health emergency (PHE) is a designation given to specific areas of our nation's healthcare that many would consider an epidemic or worth prioritizing to improve our research, data, medical approaches (ex. medicine, therapy, support services, etc.).

The Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) has the authority to designate a PHE, and it lasts in 90-day increments. This is done in conjunction with guidance and support from the President. Currently, we are several years into a PHE for due to the opioid epidemic. For a few years, we lived in the midst of the COVID-19 PHE.

How could that help autism research and services?

If autism was part of a public health emergency, here's what could happen:

- ✓ **More Money for Research:** Scientists could receive additional funds to learn more about autism and with fewer bureaucratic hurdles.
- ✓ **Better Services:** Schools, doctors, and therapists could get more support to help kids and adults with autism. Including improved therapy, tools, and relevant programs.
- ✓ **Faster Action:** During a PHE, everything speeds up – with the intent of more accurate answers to inform the best next steps (which could also quickly ramp up).

The National Council on Severe Autism (NCSA) is requesting Congress urge HHS Secretary Robert F Kennedy, Jr to declare a Public Health Emergency for Autism. This would assist families living in daily crisis to be steps closer to impactful answers and improve the availability to quality medical care and support services.