



## Training to Support Educators and Medical Professionals in Autism Care

### SB1293 - Senator Stanley, Chief Patron

Senate Bill 1293 creates optional training programs to better equip educators and medical professionals to support students and patients with autism.

#### Addressing Gaps in Support:

Children with autism often face barriers in schools and healthcare due to a lack of tailored resources. Educators, school staff, and medical professionals have expressed a need for more robust practical training to better serve students and patients with autism. Senate Bill 1293 addresses this by offering optional, high-quality training programs to improve communication and support for individuals with autism.

#### Key Elements of the Bill:

The bill establishes optional training programs for school employees and medical professionals. These programs:

- **Provide tools to improve communication** with and support for children with autism.
- **Count toward license renewal requirements** for educators and healthcare workers.
- **Are entirely voluntary**, ensuring flexibility for busy professionals.
- Involve the Board of Education in **providing guidance and local school boards in delivering training** to instructional personnel and staff who work with students.
- Require health regulatory boards to **adopt optional continuing education for medical professionals** with direct contact with children.

#### Responding to a Growing Need:

Advocacy organizations report a growing demand for autism-specific training among educators and medical personnel. This bill responds to that need by offering accessible resources without imposing mandates, empowering professionals to build their skills and better serve children with autism. Similar legislation in Massachusetts has demonstrated the effectiveness of providing optional training programs to support children with autism, offering a valuable model for Virginia to follow.

#### Support Senate Bill 1293!

By equipping educators and medical professionals with optional training, this bill takes an important step toward addressing gaps in support for individuals with autism and their families. Let's work together to create more inclusive and supportive environments for all.

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