

## **RESOLUTION NO.**

**WHEREAS,** Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a range of complex neurodevelopment disorders, characterized by social impairments, communication difficulties, and restricted, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior; and

**WHEREAS,** ASD can cause significant impairment in social, occupational and other areas of functioning; and

**WHEREAS,** Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is a behavioral intervention therapy proven effective in addressing the core symptoms of autism as well as developing skills and improving and enhancing functioning in numerous areas that affect the health & wellbeing of people with ASD; and

**WHEREAS,** ABA has been endorsed as an effective treatment for autism by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Institute of Mental Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States Surgeon General, the American Psychological Association Practice Organization, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid; and

**WHEREAS,** Autism Speaks is considered to be one of the world's leading autism science and advocacy organization, dedicated to funding research into the causes, prevention, treatments and a cure for autism; increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders; and advocating for individuals with autism and their families; and

**WHEREAS,** Children ages 18 months to 13 years old who receive early intensive behavioral therapy have been known to show substantial gains in cognition, language,

academic performance, adaptive behavior as well as some gains in social behavior measures, and outcomes have been significantly better than those of children in control groups who did not participate in ABA therapy; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin (City) has a self-funded health benefit plan, and the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 preempts most state insurance regulation, including benefit reform be applied to self-funded plans; and

**WHEREAS**, the City does not currently provide coverage for ABA therapy; and

**WHEREAS**, as of September 2014, there were seventeen children identified with autism in the City's health plan; and

**WHEREAS**, providing ABA therapy in the City's benefits package would dramatically improve the quality of life for City employees who have children with autism, and would be consistent with the practices of other local governmental bodies including AISD and Travis County; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

The City Manager is directed to investigate the feasibility of including Applied Behavioral Analysis therapy benefits as part of the City employee benefits package in the Fiscal Year 2015- 2016 proposed budget.

**ADOPTED:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2015 **ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_

Jannette S. Goodall  
City Clerk