



AIDA

Autism Infectious
Disease Alliance

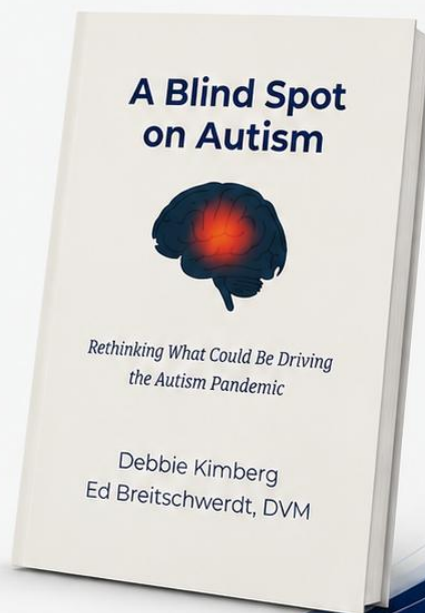
A NEW FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR AUTISM

The 2026 to 2028 IACC [Draft Strategic Plan](#) reflects a remarkable shift toward many of the medical and scientific questions explored in:

A Blind Spot on Autism



This working draft represents a major shift in how autism may be studied, understood, and addressed.

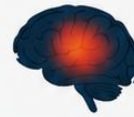


IACC STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2028
DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND DISCUSSION
JULY 31, 2026



Working draft released
for public review and
discussion

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AUTISM IS MORE THAN A BEHAVIORAL DIAGNOSIS

The new federal draft treats autism as a lifelong condition involving multiple biological systems.

It prioritizes research and clinical care involving:

-  Immune and inflammatory biology
-  Gastrointestinal disease
-  Mitochondrial and metabolic function
-  Dysautonomia
-  Sleep disorders
-  Epilepsy
-  Motor planning and apraxia
-  Mental health and functional decline



The focus is expanding from managing behaviors to understanding **health, function, and biology**.



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THERE IS NOT JUST ONE AUTISM

The plan makes heterogeneity its organizing principle.

It says autism **may involve different combinations** of:



Genetic susceptibility



Immune activation



Environmental exposures



Maternal and
prenatal biology



Metabolic function



Microbial ecology



Neurological pathways



Developmental timing



The federal question is no longer simply:

What causes autism?

It is:

***Which mechanisms matter in
which individuals?***

The draft describes autism as arising through multiple interacting pathways, rather than one universal cause.

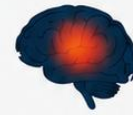


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REGRESSION IS NOW A NATIONAL PRIORITY

The draft estimates that neurodevelopmental regression occurs in **30 to 40%** of autistic children.



Loss of language, motor skills, adaptive function, sleep stability, or engagement **should not automatically be dismissed** as part of autism.

The plan calls for:



A STANDARDIZED DEFINITION
of regression



RAPID MEDICAL EVALUATION



PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH COHORTS



SERIAL BIOSPECIMENS



BIOMARKER DEVELOPMENT



SUBGROUP-SPECIFIC
TREATMENT TRIALS



It proposes a
**NATIONAL
NEURODEVELOPMENTAL
REGRESSION INITIATIVE.**

This initiative will build the infrastructure needed to detect, understand, and treat regression in autism.

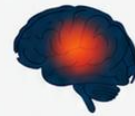


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SUDDEN DETERIORATION REQUIRES MEDICAL INVESTIGATION

The plan warns against diagnostic overshadowing.

Abrupt regression, OCD symptoms, restrictive eating, aggression, self-injury, sleep collapse, movement changes, seizures, or personality change may have:



Neurological
contributors



Environmental
contributors



Gastrointestinal
contributors



Infectious
contributors



Metabolic
contributors



Inflammatory
contributors



Medication-related
contributors



**Autoimmune or
neuroimmune**
contributors



THE RECOMMENDATION IS **NOT** TO:

- ✗ Presume that every change is caused by **autism**.
- ✗ Presume that every change is **immune-mediated**.



IT IS TO **INVESTIGATE**.



Appropriate clinical history, presentation, laboratory testing, and examination is needed to uncover **treatable causes** of sudden deterioration.



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MATERNAL HEALTH IS PART OF THE INVESTIGATION

The strategic plan identifies research priorities that include maternal health and early developmental exposures.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES INCLUDE:



**MATERNAL
IMMUNE ACTIVATION**



PLACENTAL BIOLOGY



**INFECTION DURING
PREGNANCY**



MEDICATIONS



**DIET AND NUTRITIONAL
STATUS**



**DEVELOPMENTAL TIMING
AND EXPOSURES**



Research into **maternal health, placental biology, developmental timing, and fetal susceptibility** may influence later outcomes.



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FEDERAL AUTISM RESEARCH HAS BEEN HEAVILY WEIGHTED TOWARD **GENETICS**

FY 2025 NIH autism causation research
funding shows a major imbalance.



**NEARLY \$6 TO GENETICS
FOR EVERY \$1 TO NON-GENETIC RESEARCH**

THE NEW PLAN INVESTS IN A MORE BALANCED PORTFOLIO

Expanding investigation into:



IMMUNE &
INFLAMMATORY
BIOLOGY



METABOLIC &
MITOCHONDRIAL
FUNCTION



MICROBIAL
FACTORS



GASTROINTESTINAL
BIOLOGY



ENVIRONMENTAL
EXPOSURES



DEVELOPMENTAL
TIMING



AUTONOMIC
DYSFUNCTION



REGRESSION &
TRAJECTORY



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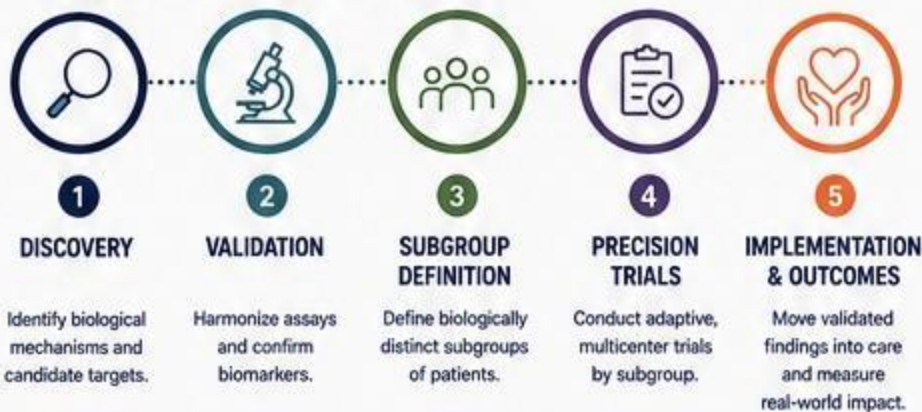
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TURNING DISCOVERY INTO REAL-WORLD IMPACT

The proposed National Autism Precision Therapeutics Initiative (**NAPTI**) creates a clear path from research to patient benefit.



The goal: the **right treatment**
for the **right patient**
at the **right time**.

Biology-driven research. Subgroup-specific care.
Better outcomes across the lifespan.



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COORDINATED FEDERAL ACTION IS ESSENTIAL

The plan calls for federal agencies to work together to move research into clinical care.

**NIH
FDA****NIH + FDA**

Lead biomarker research, patient subgrouping, and precision trials.

**CDC
HRSA****CDC + HRSA**

Identify patterns, strengthen surveillance, and educate clinicians.

**CMS
AHRQ****CMS + AHRQ**

Improve access, diagnostic pathways, and standards of care.

**DoD + FEDERAL PARTNERS**

Expand research, resources, and support across the lifespan.

**ONE SHARED GOAL:**

**Better research. Better care.
Better outcomes.**

**IACC STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2028**

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UNDERSTAND THE SCIENCE BEHIND HHS' NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

The plan is asking bigger questions.
The science in *A Blind Spot on Autism*
helps answer them.



THE FULL STORY.

More than 300 peer-reviewed
studies.



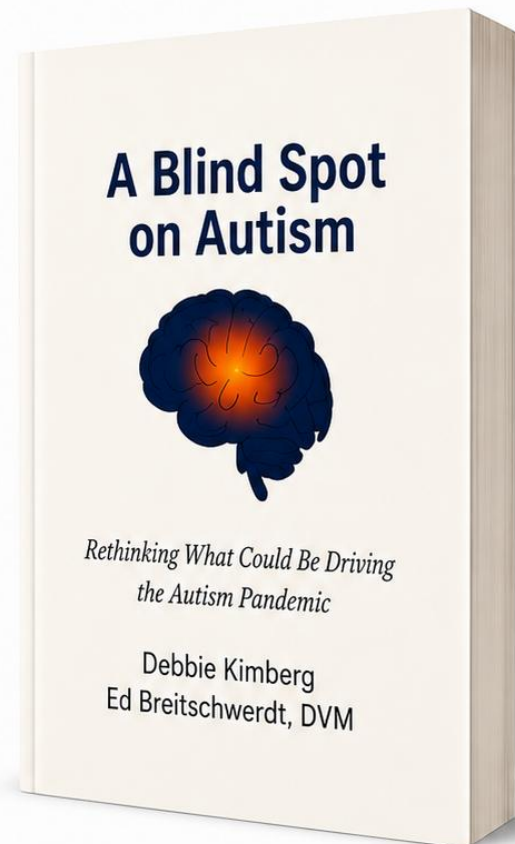
THE RESEARCH.

Connections they're just
beginning to explore.



THE QUESTIONS STILL LEFT UNANSWERED.

Your child's future may
depend on the answers.



ONE SHARED GOAL:

Better research. Better care. Better outcomes.



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