

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

**Department: Mental Health** \_\_\_\_\_

**HB Section(s):** 10.410 10.411

**Program Name: Autism** \_\_\_\_\_

**Program is found in the following core budget(s): Autism Centers**

**1a. What strategic priority does this program address?**

Services increase community capacity to diagnose autism spectrum disorder, support community inclusion, positive behaviors, independence, and employment for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families.

**1b. What does this program do?**

Department of Mental Health (DMH) Medicaid waivers, Missouri's Autism Projects, and through specialized diagnostic clinics. There are approximately 16,471 individuals with an autism diagnosis who are enrolled with the Division of DD. In total, \$333.7 million is being spent on supports for individuals with an autism diagnosis.

Autism is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that includes a broad range of conditions that affects social interaction, communication, and behavior. Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States with a prevalence rate of 1 in 44, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020). Boys are 4 times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls. This ratio is consistent with reports from Missouri's Autism Centers. The range and severity of ASD can vary widely from mild to severe impairment. Common symptoms include difficulty with communication, difficulty with social interaction, obsessive interests, and repetitive behaviors. Early recognition along with behavioral, educational, and family-based interventions may reduce symptoms and support development and learning.

DD provides residential, home, and community based services to individuals with ASD through four Medicaid waivers. In addition, DD oversees five regional Autism Projects in Missouri: Southeast, Southwest, Central, Northwest, and East, each governed by a local Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Each of these local advisory groups make funding and provider recommendations of General Revenue funds for its region. Based on PAC recommendations, DD contracts with local providers for a variety of intervention services aimed at supporting families and helping them keep their loved ones integrated within the home and community.

DD contracts with six regional Autism Centers and two intervention centers to provide ASD diagnostic evaluations and intervention services. Missouri's Autism Centers are clinics which provide best practice diagnostic evaluations and referrals for children, as well as training for families and community education. In addition, Missouri's Autism Centers provide clinical training to and serve as a statewide resource for the medical and clinical community to advance evidence-based and emerging best practices for ASD diagnostics and intervention.

In FY 2023, DD received funding to provide Autism Spectrum Disorder comprehensive services for children and their families who reside in Southwest Missouri. DD is contracting to launch a large-scale diagnostic and treatment clinic in Springfield with treatment clinics in other rural areas to create more treatment and diagnostic options in Southwest Missouri. DD is also contracting with other stakeholders in Joplin to expand ASD diagnostic and treatment services.

DD also contracts with the University of Missouri-Columbia to implement a series of Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) Autism programs to address a shortage of clinical and community providers throughout Missouri that can appropriately diagnose and care for individuals with Autism and their families. The average age of ASD diagnosis is over 4 years even though ASD can be diagnosed as early as age 2, (Whittling Down the Wait Time, 2016). Through this contract and the Autism Center's prioritization of diagnostic evaluations for those under age 4, DD hopes to diagnose kids in Missouri earlier, allowing for earlier interventions and overall better outcomes for individuals with ASD.

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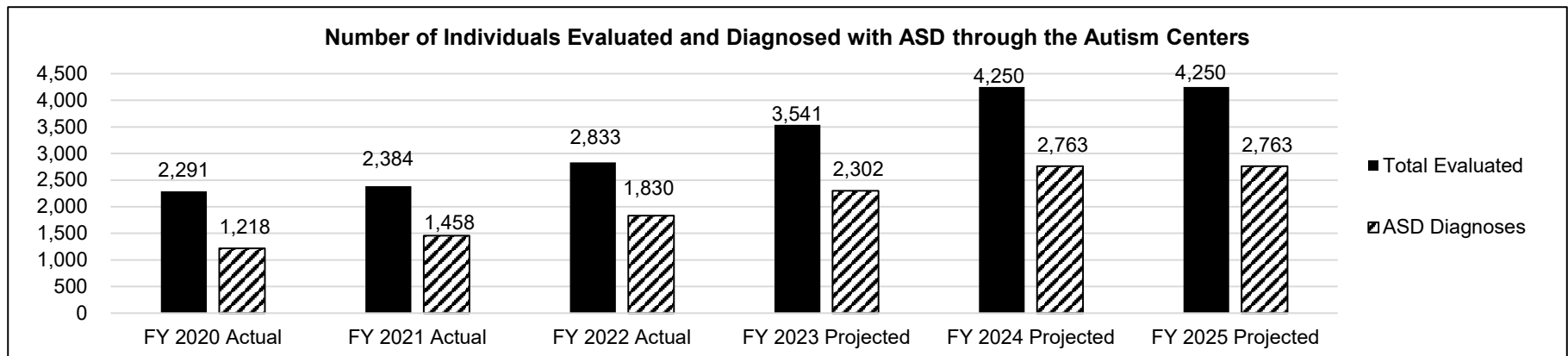
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**2a. Provide an activity measure(s) for the program.**

- Increasing the number of individuals accessing autism-specific services within the home and community supports inclusion and fosters independence.

	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Projected	FY 2024 Projected	FY 2025 Projected
Missouri Autism Projects						
East	1,125	844	920	1,100	1,130	1,130
Northwest	905	742	859	925	925	925
Central	1,389	1,121	1,713	1,300	1,300	1,300
Southeast	447	202	591	450	450	450
Southwest	997	668	1,684	950	950	950
Diagnostic Clinics	2,291	2,384	2,833	5,882	5,932	5,982
<b>Total Served:</b>	<b>7,154</b>	<b>5,961</b>	<b>8,600</b>	<b>10,607</b>	<b>10,687</b>	<b>10,737</b>

- Access to evidenced-based ASD evaluations and appropriate diagnosis allows families to access appropriate intervention and support services.



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**2b. Provide a measure(s) of the program's quality.**

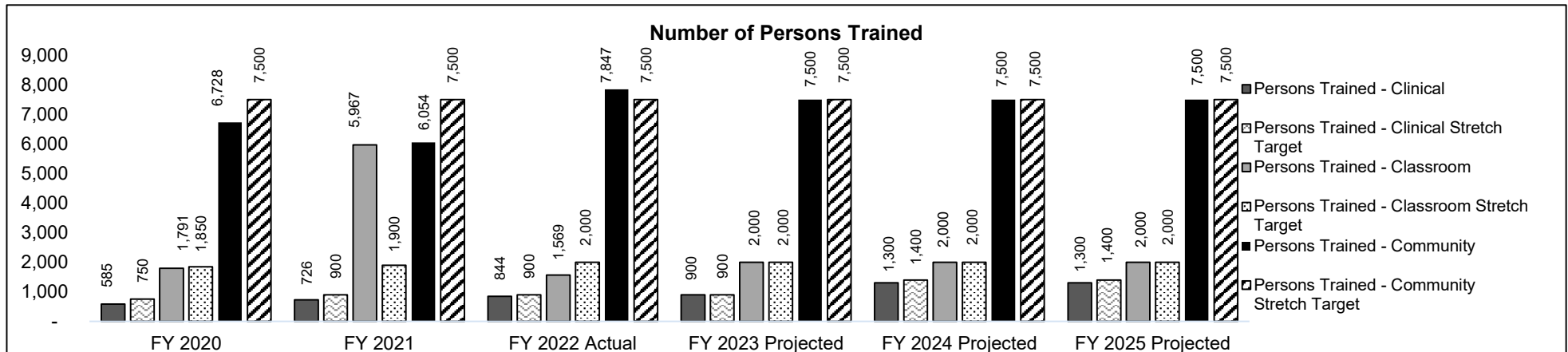
- Missouri's Autism Centers' median age (in months) at diagnosis compares favorably to national average (see note below).

<b>Median Age at Diagnosis of ASD (months):</b>			
<b>Center</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>
Thompson Center	60	55	69
Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital/Knights of Columbus(KOC) Development Center	50	46	53
Children's Mercy Hospital	46	44	56
SEMO Autism Center	67	59	65
Washington University - St. Louis	46	47	44
Mercy Kids Autism Center - St. Louis	42	41	50
<b>National Median Age at Diagnosis: 50 months   Missouri Median Age at Diagnosis: 55 months</b>			

Note: Children with ASD can be diagnosed as early as 2 years of age, but on average, the age of diagnosis is after 4 years (Gordon-Lipkin, E., Foster, J., & Peacock, G. (2016)). The most recent CDC data from 2021 states the median age of ASD diagnosis is 50 months.

**2c. Provide a measure(s) of the program's impact.**

- Targeted trainings increase awareness and advance evidence-based, best practices for clinicians, educators, providers, and community members.



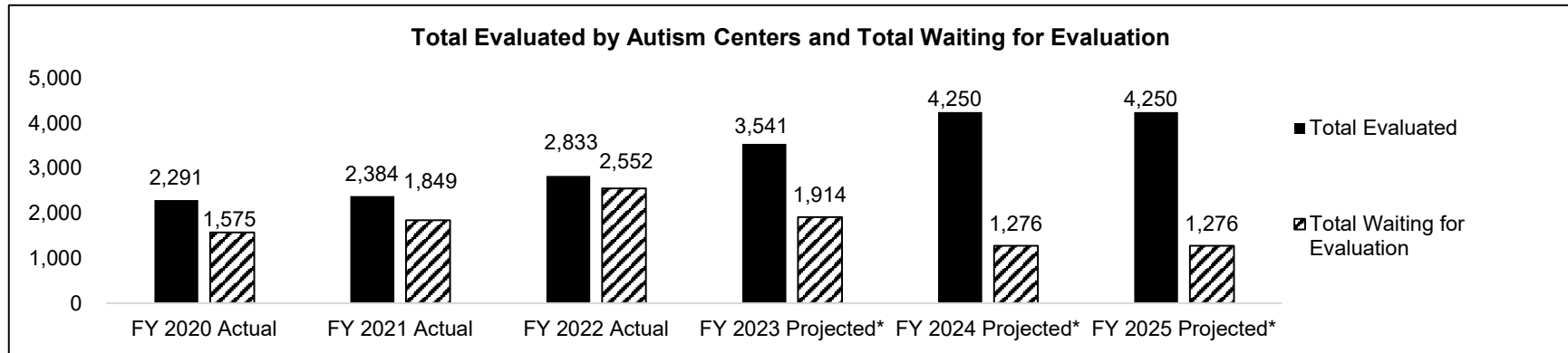
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**2c. Provide a measure(s) of the program's impact. (Continued)**

- Number of children to be evaluated has remained steady despite slight increases in those evaluated due to the increase in prevalence of ASD.



\*Projections of increased diagnostic capacity once Autism Centers are fully staffed.

<b>FY 2022 Average Number of Individuals Waiting for ASD Evaluation</b>			
<b>Center</b>	<b>4 Years Old and Younger</b>	<b>5 Years Old and Older</b>	<b>Total</b>
Thompson Center	255	697	952
Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital	484	246	730
Children's Mercy Hospital	159	217	376
SEMO Autism Center	34	34	68
Washington University - St. Louis	166	109	275
Mercy Kids Autism Center - St. Louis	106	45	151
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,204</b>	<b>1,348</b>	<b>2,552</b>

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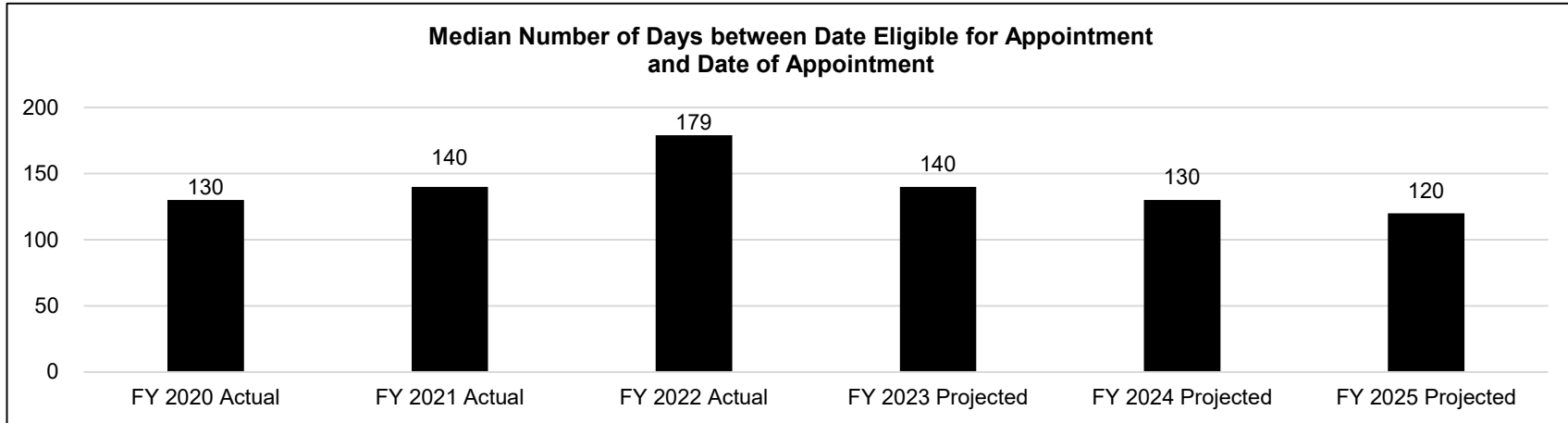
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**2c. Provide a measure(s) of the program's impact. (Continued)**

- Length of time between eligibility and appointment indicates how long individuals must wait for an evaluation supports the need for additional resources for ASD assessment and diagnosis.



**2d. Provide a measure(s) of the program's efficiency.**

- Autism Centers continue to prioritize timely appointments for children under 5, while working to reduce the overall wait time for appointments.

<b>FY 2021 Median Number of Days between Date Eligible for Appointment and Date of Appointment</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Median Days Waiting</b>
Children 4 Years Old and Younger	110
Children 5 Years Old and Older	230
All Individuals	140

Note: Wait times for a comprehensive ASD assessment vary greatly across the country, ranging from 45 days to more than 365 days. Individuals receiving an ASD diagnosis can access a variety of intervention services. Individuals accessing intervention services at earlier stages are likely to achieve better long-term outcomes.

Source: *Whittling Down the Wait Time, 2016*

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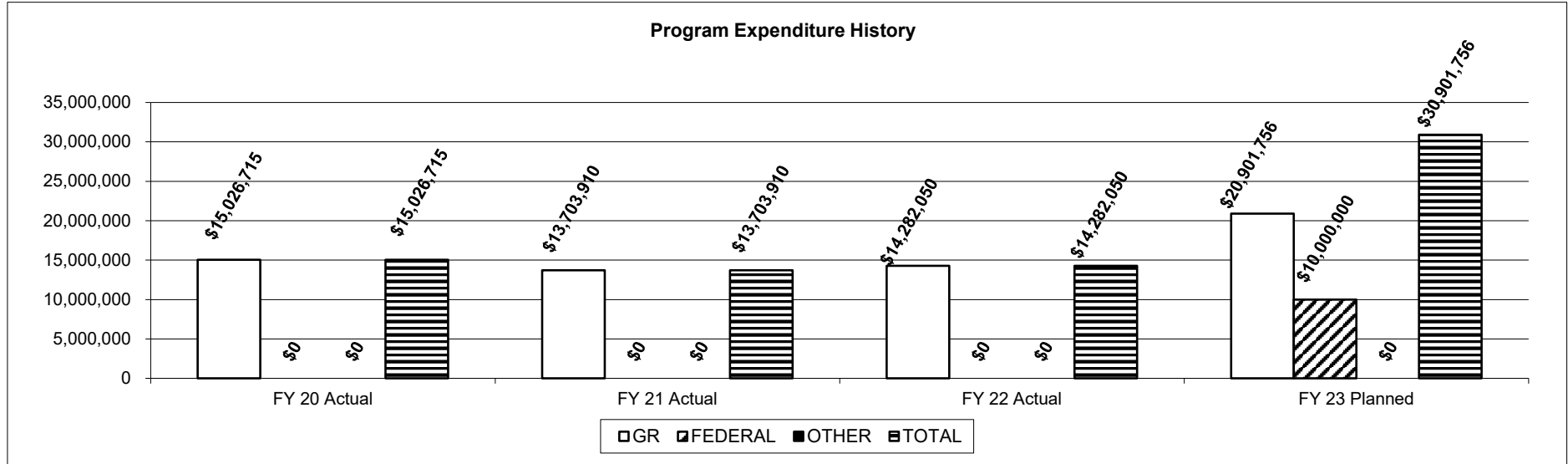
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**3. Provide actual expenditures for the prior three fiscal years and planned expenditures for the current fiscal year. (Note: Amounts do not include fringe benefit costs.)**



Note: FY 2023 Planned expenditures from Federal funds include \$10M for the establishment of autism centers in Springfield and Joplin from Budget Stabilization, and \$5,822,738 additional funds appropriated for existing autism centers.

**4. What are the sources of the "Other " funds?**

Budget Stabilization Fund

**5. What is the authorization for this program, i.e., federal or state statute, etc.? (Include the federal program number, if applicable.)**

Chapter 633, RSMo (Support services defined in Sections 630.405 through 630.460.)

**6. Are there federal matching requirements? If yes, please explain.**

No.

**7. Is this a federally mandated program? If yes, please explain.**

No.