

NEWS RELEASE



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Substantial Growth in Number of Students with Autism Makes Huge Impact on Capacity of School Districts Nationwide

Number of U.S. children diagnosed with autism is increasing dramatically each year

DENVER (Aug. 18, 2009) – In the last ten years, five times more children have been diagnosed with autism than in prior decades. This dramatic growth of students on the autism spectrum requiring treatment or special education services is greatly affecting school districts nationwide. The additional support needed is straining district budgets and resources – affecting the overall treatment and education of all students.

The growth in the number of students diagnosed with autism enrolled in school districts nationwide is radically increasing, which is greatly overwhelming district and school administrators. In 2000, there were 93,000 students with autism attending U.S. schools. Now, there are more than 300,000 cases, and many industry professionals expect this number to increase to 500,000 by 2010.

The cost of educating a developmentally delayed child, like those classified on the autism spectrum, continue to climb, and are generally considered to be four to 10 times that of other children (approximately \$40,000 to \$80,000 per year). In addition, districts are often confronted by well-prepared parents who are armed with resources that can force districts to provide “quality” education, which when placed offsite via a court order can cost more than \$100,000 per child per year.

Few districts have the infrastructure to support the growth in students entering the school system who are diagnosed with autism. Most important, most general education teachers are insufficiently trained. And, intervention for children with autism is no longer a “one-size-fits-all” answer. This places a great deal of pressure on district leadership to design and implement differentiated instruction plans that meet the expectations of all parties.

“What our school districts need are ways to demystify autism for the general education teacher and frontline educator – those people that work directly with students with autism,” said Kevin Custer, CEO of Virtual Expert Clinics. “Teachers and district administrators need full-time access to evidence-based resources that can provide solutions to complex issues. They need an efficient way to monitor and track the progress of each student. And finally, they need a solution

that can effectively communicate the status and progress of each student to all people involved – teachers, special education teams, parents, and administrators.”

Virtual Expert Clinics, Inc., encourages district administrators nationwide to reach out to local organizations, such as their regional chapter of the [Autism Society of America](#) or to national organizations, such as [AutismSpeaks.org](#), to access up-to-date information about this critical issue. For more information about one solution that can help, visit [www.AutismPro.com](#).

About Virtual Expert Clinics, Inc.

Virtual Expert Clinics, provider of a 21st century response to educating students with autism, works with school districts, early intervention providers, and governments to supplement quality programs. The company’s flagship product, *AutismPro*, allows administrators to build capacity and helps educators to improve outcomes. Virtual Expert Clinics has offices in Denver, Colo., and Fredericton, New Brunswick. For more information, visit <http://www.AutismPro.com/Media> or phone 1-866-462-0991.

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