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MARKET RESEARCH FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN USA

▪ **Autism**

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a group of multifaceted neurodevelopment disabilities characterized by social, behavioral and communication challenges. This condition is characterized by communication difficulties, social impairment and repetitive and stereotyped behavioral patterns. It is a spectrum condition because while all people affected with autism share some similar difficulties, the level of medical condition affects them in different ways. Symptoms of ASD vary widely and it may sometimes go unrecognized especially in mildly affected children.

Early indicators include loss of language or social skills, lack of response, poor eye contact, no single words or two-word phrases by the age of 2 years. If left unrecognized by the age of 3 years, one may recognize later through impaired ability to make friends, stereotyped or unusual use of language, inability to initiate or withstand a conversation with others; varying specific routines or rituals and impairment or absence of imaginative and social interactions.

2.1 million children and adults now live with autism. Yet, few therapies exist to treat this disease-just a few medications and ABA (applied behavioral analysis) programs. This is a fragmented \$1.8 billion market comprised of for-profit and non-profit providers that serve autistic patients via brick & mortar centers and in-home therapy provided by therapists. Waiting lists are growing and only 36% of patients are estimated to have access to insurance coverage.

▪ **Impairments with ligaments**

According to the *AMA Guides*, impairment is an alteration of an individual's health status that has been assessed by medical means. Impairment is used to describe a static or stable condition that has had sufficient time to allow optimal tissue repair and that is unlikely to change, despite further medical or surgical therapy. *The Florida Impairment Schedule* defines impairment as

anatomic or functional abnormality or loss after maximal medical improvement (MMI) has been achieved.

The purpose of impairment rating is to represent impairment by using a generally accepted system to estimate the degree to which illness or injury diminishes an individual's capacity to daily activities. Activities of daily living (ADL) include self-care, personal hygiene, preparing and eating food, communication (spoken and written), maintaining posture, standing, sitting, caring for home and personal finances, walking, traveling, recreational and social activities, and work-related activities. An individual with an impairment may or may not have sufficient capacity to meet the demands of a particular profession or occupation.

Disability refers to an individual's inability to complete a task or a duty. Disability is an alteration of the individual's capacity to meet personal, social, or occupational demands or statutory or regulatory requirements because of an impairment. Disability arises from a discrepancy between the limitations an impairment places on an individual and the external tasks that must be performed (e.g, tasks in an occupational setting).

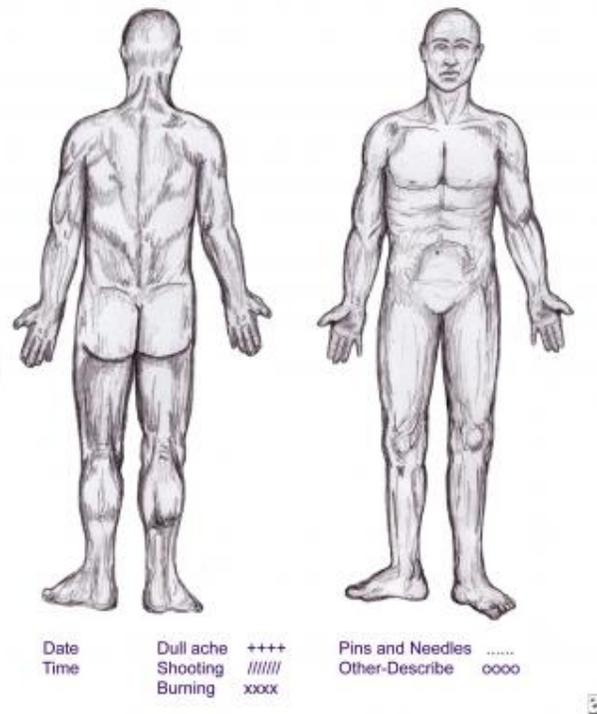
Impairment, however, is an artificial construct usually one the legal system creates to attempt to quantify the person's diminution in health. According to the fourth edition of the *AMA Guides*, "An impairment is a deviation from normal in a body part or organ system and its functioning." However, normal is a vague term that varies greatly depending on many factors, such as age and sex. Normal is not a fine point or an absolute reference in terms of physical and mental functioning or good health. Most often, normality is a range or a zone, as it is with vision and hearing.

Many state disability systems adopt an impairment guide or schedule for calculating damages. For example, Florida has adopted the *Florida Uniform Permanent Impairment Rating Schedule (FUPIRS)*. This schedule is loosely modeled after the *AMA Guides* and purports to give impairment ratings based on various injuries or illnesses.

As a practical example, an individual may have minor impairment and still be considered totally disabled. For instance, an uneducated bricklayer may have 5% impairment due to lumbar strain. His physical restrictions may make it impossible for him to continue working in his field, and if

he does not have the education to be retrained, he is effectively unable to return to work. Therefore, the extent of his impairment may be only 5%, but he is 100% disabled in terms of employment. In another example, a noted author and lecturer may have sustained a catastrophic injury causing thoracolumbar paraplegia. His impairment rating may be 70% according to the *AMA Guides*. However, because he can continue his work with little to no interruption, he may be considered to have no vocational disability.

A study by Farzad et al found only a limited association between impairment and disability in patients with hand injury. Using the *AMA Guides* to assess impairment, as well as the Disabilities of the Arm, Shoulder and Hand (DASH) questionnaire and the Michigan Hand Outcomes Questionnaire (MHQ) to measure disability, the investigators found that impairment level, together with gender, was responsible for only 22% of DASH score variability and, together with age, only 19% of MHQ score variability. Moreover, impairment level did not correlate with pain intensity, although other factors, including time since surgery, did.



Symptom-discomfort chart.

- **What is being done to help them gain skillful employment**

A study by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services revealed companies that employ individuals with disabilities gain several advantages over other businesses, including:

- **Skilled employees.** Employees with disabilities learn to persevere and develop problem-solving, planning and people skills as part of managing a disability
- **Solid performances.** Statistically, employees with disabilities have better retention rates
- **Cost savings.** Workers with disabilities are consistently rated as average or above in performance, quality and quantity of work, flexibility and attendance

- **Vocational rehabilitation**

There are two Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Programs in Florida: The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and The Division of Blind Services. Vocational Rehabilitation is the State of Florida's largest employment program serving the needs of Floridians with disabilities. Both programs are charged with providing an array of employment supports and job placement assistance to eligible individuals with disabilities. These employment supports may include tuition assistance for colleges or vocational schools, books and supplies needed for school, assistive technology aids or devices, transportation services, occupational licenses, vehicle modifications, psychological counseling, medical services, and job placement assistance. Services are individualized and are based on an individual's needs and employment goals.

Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is a federal-state program in the U.S. state of Florida that provides services to people who have physical or mental disabilities to help them get or keep a job. VR is committed to helping people with disabilities find meaningful careers. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services ensure that VR services are provided to eligible individuals with all types of hearing loss. Necessary assistance and skills training for both employee and employer can help persons who are deaf or hard of hearing secure and retain employment. Ticket to Work is a Social

Security Administration (SSA) program available to Floridians. For those who qualify for social security benefits, tickets will be issued and may be taken to Employment Network (EN) participants, such as VR. These participants offer access to employment and rehabilitation services necessary to help a person secure and retain employment. This program is voluntary.

VR Transition Youth Services help students with disabilities train for a job, continue their education, or find a job after high school. Under this program, every youth will have the opportunity to participate in sponsored career counselling, work readiness training, and fully integrated work experiences in the community. These services are delivered while youth are still in high school and establish the foundation for a seamless transition to individualized training, education, and employment.

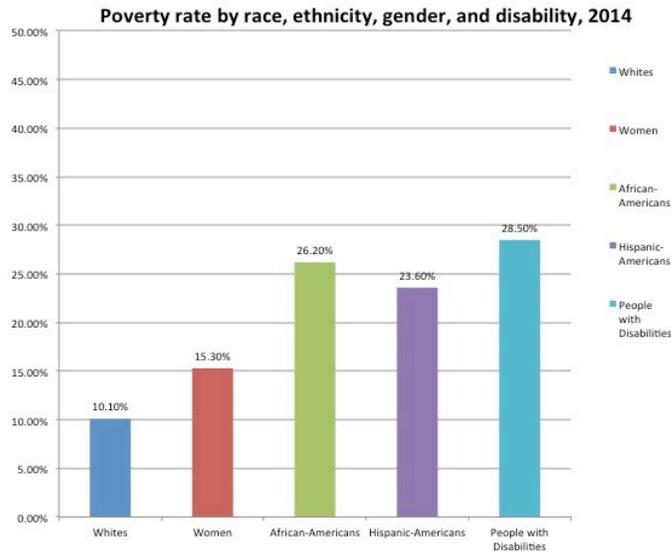
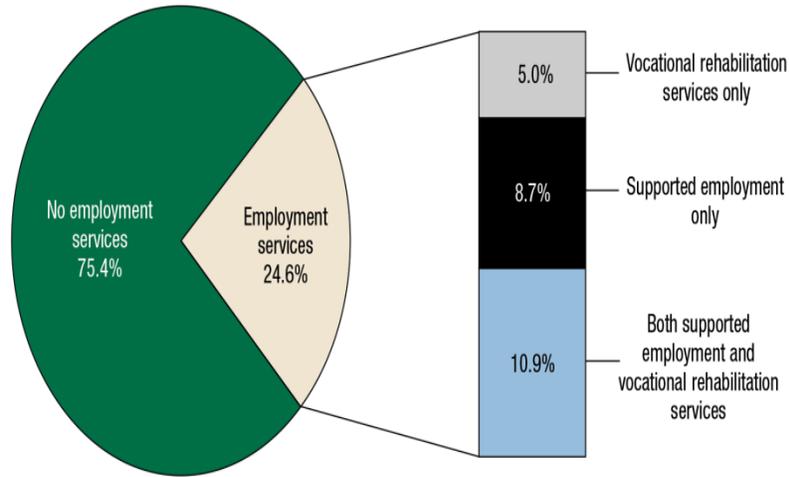
VR coordinates services with available mental health centres, programs, and service providers to assist individuals with mental or emotional disabilities in becoming employed.

Supported Employment serves people with the most significant disabilities who have not been successful in competitive employment. The program helps individuals become employed in their community by using services such as job coaching and follow-up to promote employment stability.

Figure 1.
Disability Employment Rate by State, 2014

	State	%		State	%		State	%		State	%		State	%
1	South Dakota	50.1	12	Montana	40.5	23	Oklahoma	36.4	34	California	33.3	45	Arkansas	29.2
2	North Dakota	49.9	13	Connecticut	40.2	24	Oregon	36.4	35	Arizona	32.8	46	South Carolina	29.0
3	Iowa	46.5	14	New Hampshire	40.0	25	Indiana	36.2	36	Missouri	32.8	47	Mississippi	27.4
4	Nebraska	46.0	15	Kansas	39.8	26	Vermont	36.2	37	Maine	32.5	48	Kentucky	27.3
5	Wyoming	45.2	16	Wisconsin	39.8	27	Illinois	35.7	38	Louisiana	32.1	49	Alabama	27.2
6	Minnesota	44.4	17	New Jersey	39.2	28	Delaware	35.6	39	North Carolina	31.3	50	West Virginia	25.6
7	Utah	44.0	18	Maryland	39.1	29	Massachusetts	35.5	40	New Mexico	30.4		Washington	30.3
8	Hawaii	42.4	19	Idaho	38.8	30	Ohio	34.6	41	Florida	30.1		D.C.	
9	Colorado	41.6	20	Texas	38.0	31	Pennsylvania	34.5	42	Tennessee	29.9			
10	Nevada	40.9	21	Washington	37.7	32	Rhode Island	33.9	43	Georgia	29.6			
11	Alaska	40.8	22	Virginia	37.6	33	New York	33.6	44	Michigan	29.6		United States	34.4

Source: Annual Disability Statistics Compendium



- **What vocational rehabilitation is done in USA to shape the lives of people with disabilities**

A disabled person is assumed to be unable to pursue normal activities. He or she is a person with whom all is not quite in order. There is an abundance of scientific literature that depicts disabled people as having a behavioural problem, and in many countries "defectology" was and still is a recognized science that sets out to measure the degree of deviation. Individuals who have a

disability generally defend themselves against such a characterization. Others resign themselves to the role of a disabled person. Classifying persons as disabled disregards the fact that what disabled individuals have in common with the non-disabled usually far outweighs that which makes them different. Further, the underlying concept that disability is a deviation from the norm is a questionable value statement. These considerations have incited many people to prefer the term persons with disabilities to that of disabled persons, as the latter term could be understood as making disability the primary characteristic of an individual. It is thoroughly conceivable that human and social reality be defined in such a way that disability be regarded as consistent with normalcy and not as a deviation from it. In fact, the Declaration that was adopted in 1995 by the heads of state and government at the UN World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen describes disability as a form of social diversity. This definition demands a conception of society which is a society "for all". Thereby previous attempts at defining disability negatively, as deviation from the norm or as deficiency, are no longer valid. A society which adapts itself to disability in an inclusive manner could substantially overcome those effects of disability which were previously experienced as overly restrictive.

- **Web Analysis of the key market player of vocational rehabilitation**

According to the United States Census Bureau, approximately 56.7 million people have a disability, representing approximately 19% of the civilian non- institutionalized population (Brault, 2012). National statistics indicate that only 18% of people with a disability age 16 years and older are employed, compared to 63.7% of persons without a disability (U.S. Department of Labour, 2012a; 2012b). Unemployment and underemployment problems facing people with disabilities have been made even more acute due to the global financial crisis of 2007–2008, with the effects of the crisis still being felt today. The state-federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) program, which serves approximately one million individuals a year and spends approximately three billion dollars annually plays an instrumental role to assist individuals with chronic illnesses and disabilities achieve their independent living and employment goals (Dean, Pepper, Schmidt, & Stern, 2013; Dutta et al., 2008; Martin, West-Evans, & Connelly, 2010; U.S. Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2005). Over half of the people with disabilities have found employment in integrated settings after receiving VR services (Dutta et al., 2008).

However, the average hourly earnings of all VR customers in competitive employment are only 52% of the general workforce (Rehabilitation Services Administration [RSA], 2008). Minorities receive only 80% of the services provided to European American consumers. In addition, employment, earnings, and the amount of purchased services received while in the state-federal VR program varied significantly by the consumer's disability types and other personal factors (GAO, 2005).

- **Budget of Vocational Rehabilitation:**

Public spending for disability programs in the United States totaled \$519.2 billion in fiscal year 2006 (Braddock, 2010).

This constituted 11 percent of total federal, state, and local spending in the U.S. that year. Thirty percent of disability spending (\$157.3 billion) was allocated for long-term care; 27 percent for income maintenance (29 percent when long-term care related income maintenance support is included); 26 percent (\$133.4 billion) for health care; and 15 percent (\$77.8 billion) for special education. The \$8.2 billion for long-term care-related income maintenance includes federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver participants with disabilities (\$4.5 billion) and SSI State Supplement payments for community-based services (\$3.6 billion). The Medicaid HCBS Waiver program, authorized under Title XIX of the Social Security Act, allows participating states to develop residential alternatives for individuals with I/DD who would otherwise require care in a nursing facility, state mental hospital, or state institution.

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Appropriations History
(dollars in thousands)

Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
2008	3,184,263	\$3,279,743	\$3,286,942	3,276,768
2009	3,218,264	3,387,443 ¹	3,379,109 ¹	3,387,762
Recovery Act Supplemental (PL 111-5)	0	700,000	610,000	680,000
2010	3,500,735	3,504,305	3,507,322 ²	3,506,861
2011	3,565,326	3,501,766 ³	3,542,510 ²	3,474,718 ⁴
2012	3,541,111	3,522,686 ⁵	3,511,735 ⁵	3,511,281
2013	3,517,710	3,511,281 ⁶	3,626,380 ⁶	3,622,925
2014	3,655,577	N/A ⁷	3,698,174 ²	3,680,497
2015	3,683,335	N/A ⁷	3,722,853 ⁸	3,709,853

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Vocational rehabilitation State grants

(Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title I, Parts A, B (Sections 110 and 111), and C)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2017 Authorization: \$3,398,554¹

Budget Authority:

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Change</u>
State grants	\$3,348,770	\$3,355,454	+\$6,684
Indian set-aside	<u>43,000</u>	<u>43,100</u>	<u>+100</u>
Total	3,391,770 ²	3,398,554,	+6,784

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program supports formula grants to States that provide individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, the services they need to obtain competitive integrated employment. Grant funds are administered by VR

agencies designated by each State. There are currently a total of 80 State VR agencies. Thirty-two (32) States operate a “combined” agency serving all disability categories. Twenty-four (24) States operate a separate agency for individuals who are blind or visually impaired and a “general” agency for all other disability categories. The authorizing legislation requires the program to be funded at least at the prior year level, and increased by the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers (CPIU) over the previous year.

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