



OAR's Second Zogby Poll Shows Six Percent Increase in Autism Awareness

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2004

Contact: Wendy McKinnon, Programs and Outreach Associate

(703)243-3466, scholarship@researchautism.org

ARLINGTON, VA— According to a recent nationwide poll conducted by Zogby International at the request of the Virginia-based Organization for Autism Research (OAR) and Phoenix-based Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC), 32 percent of adults nationwide know someone with autism. This number is up from 26 percent just 15 months ago in a similar poll conducted by OAR in September 2002. Additionally, the National Alliance for Autism Research conducted a survey in the fall of 2002, which placed awareness at approximately 20 percent.

The Zogby poll was conducted in late March and included interviews with approximately 1,200 adults selected at random nationwide. Margin of error is +/- 2.9 percentage points.

“These results indicate that more people are becoming aware of this disorder, which affects as many as one out of 166 children nationwide today,” said Denise D. Resnik, president and co-founder of SARRC. “The results are likely due to a combination of an increased occurrence of autism and aggressive outreach efforts by organizations such as SARRC and OAR.”

“Turning the results around, nearly two-thirds of Americans don’t have any direct experience or knowledge relative to autism,” said OAR Executive Director Mike Maloney. “Coming just as ‘National Autism Awareness Month’ begins, this information should lend added purpose to the awareness campaign. Clearly, there’s still a long way to go.”

Other key results from the Zogby poll include: Caucasians (35 percent) are more likely than Hispanics (25 percent) or African Americans (22 percent) to know someone with autism. People with higher education and higher household incomes are also more likely to say they personally know someone with autism. And almost half (47 percent, up from 37 percent in 2002) of those who know someone with autism describe their relationship to this person as a friend or neighbor. The remaining results were identical to 2002, with 14 percent reporting that an immediate family member has autism and in 11 percent of cases, a distant relative.

After the increase in awareness, the next most significant result was an indication that families who have children on the autism spectrum are increasingly more likely to move in order to obtain better services or education for their child. Compared to 2002, this poll shows that people are now twice as likely to move to another area for better services or care.

The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) was founded in 2001 by parents and grandparents of children and adults with autism. OAR’s mission is to apply science to the challenges of autism to answer questions that parents, families, individuals with autism, teachers and caregivers confront daily. OAR is a nonprofit organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia and

established in accordance with Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code (Tax ID Number: 54- 2062167). For more information about OAR, call (703) 351-5031 or visit www.researchautism.org.

Founded in 1997, the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center (SARRC) is a nonprofit, community-based organization dedicated to autism research, education and resources for children and young adults with autistic disorders and their families. SARRC undertakes self-directed and collaborative research projects, serves as a satellite site for national and international projects, and provides up-to-date information, training and assistance to families and professionals about autism and related disorders. For more information about SARRC, call (602) 340-8717 or visit www.autismcenter.org.

Copies of Zogby's narrative summary are available upon request by contacting either [OAR](#) or SARRC.