

## Fiscal Highlights

### **PEHP Autism Treatment Pilot - Brian D. Fay**

In the 2012 General Session, the Legislature passed H.B. 272, Pilot Program for Autism Spectrum Disorders Services, which created a two-year pilot program for the Public Employees Health Program (PEHP) to provide autism treatment services for state employees and their dependents. It was estimated that PEHP would use approximately \$1.1 million of excess reserves in FY 2013 to implement this pilot program.

As the pilot program comes to an end, the data collected reflects a much different picture than originally anticipated. Instead of 46 children participating in the program at an annual cost of \$23,800, the pilot only drew 23 children at an annual cost of \$13,500. The cost of the pilot was less than 30% of the original estimate.

The original estimate was based on the Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimate of a prevalence of 1 in 110 and a \$30,000 annual cost, based on a 2007 academic article. While the Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) prevalence in Utah may be higher than even the CDC average, the pilot program indicates that not all children with ASD will require treatment, and for those who do, the cost of treatment can vary greatly.

During the 2014 General Session, the Legislature passed House Bill 88, Autism Program Amendments, which converted the two-year pilot into an ongoing program. Utilizing the data captured during the pilot program, PEHP now estimates this program will cost an average of \$365,000 per year over the next three years.