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The Arc of California Responds to Recent Statements on Autism Research and the Contributions of Individuals with Autism

SACRAMENTO, CA -- The Arc of California, a leading organization dedicated to promoting the rights, inclusion, and well-being of individuals with developmental disabilities across the state, stands united with our local and [national partners](#) in acknowledging the rich contributions people with autism have made to our communities, and affirming the importance of science-based understanding and respectful acknowledgment of the autism community.

We are alarmed by recent rhetoric by the Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who publicly described autism as a “chronic disease,” or “epidemic” and stated that children with autism will “never hold a job... never write a poem...never go out on a date.” Such language fosters stigma and misinformation. Furthermore, proposals to cut vital programs like Medicaid, education, and community services threaten the supports that enable Californians with autism to thrive.

“The comments made by Secretary Kennedy Jr. are harmful and frankly fly in the face of reality, especially considering the thousands of Californians with autism who have jobs and, of course, go on dates and find love. Misinformation about autism only serves to divide us and undermine efforts to create a more inclusive and understanding community, and the person appointed to be in charge of many programs across the country that support people with autism should know and do better,” said Jordan Lindsey, Executive Director of The Arc of California, who represents 20 Arc chapters throughout California.

As a parent-advocate for an adult son with multiple disabilities, including autism, and President of The Arc of California Board of Directors, Pat Hornbecker stated: “I am shocked and disappointed that the Secretary of HHS would promote such misinformation about people with autism. There are countless success stories of individuals living full, meaningful lives—working, forming families, and pursuing their dreams. It’s shameful to dismiss these achievements. We need leaders who see and support the meaningful lives of people with disabilities, not deny them.”

We call on leaders, the media, and the public to:

- Uphold scientific integrity and reject misinformation.
- Recognize and celebrate the valuable contributions of individuals with autism.



- Support policies and investments that advance evidence-based research, inclusive education, and accessible services.

The Arc of California remains committed to fostering an inclusive society where every person with a disability is respected, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

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About The Arc of California

Established in 1950, The Arc of California promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes. The Arc of California provides supports and services to thousands of individuals with disabilities and their families through its 20 chapters across the state.