

# The Pediatric Emergency Department at Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital Becomes First Certified Autism Center™ in NJ

*Pediatric Emergency Dept. at Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital at Hackensack Meridian Children's Health becomes first Certified Autism Center™ in New Jersey*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Pediatric Emergency Department at Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital at

Hackensack Meridian Children's Health receives the accolade of becoming the first emergency department in New Jersey to earn the [Certified Autism Center™](#) (CAC) designation through the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES).



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*Stephen Percy, M.D., chair of pediatrics*

As part of the CAC designation process, at least 80% of physicians, nurses and patient-facing department staff completed a training and certification program to better understand the autism spectrum and strategies for communication, patient interaction and safety. IBCCES also reviewed the emergency department on-site to provide additional recommendations and tools to enhance the experience for autistic and sensory-sensitive patients and their families.

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we continue to do to care for the children and families who entrust their care to us,” says Stephen Percy, M.D., chair of pediatrics, Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital at Hackensack University Medical Center. “Our team and the programs and services we provide within developmental medicine speak to our commitment to an autism-friendly culture and environment, which supports the unique needs and challenges of the community we serve.”

Many autistic individuals have different needs related to communication, pain perception and

other treatments. Offering care that includes the patient and family in each step of the process is vital. With 1 in 6 people experiencing sensory needs or sensitivities and 1 in 36 children diagnosed with autism in the United States, it's essential to provide appropriate training for ER staff so patients, their families and their caregivers feel confident that they will receive supportive care. IBCCES' programs were created by clinical experts, as well as autistic individuals, to ensure a well-rounded approach.

In addition to autism training, the ER has implemented several programs to create a welcome environment for every patient. The Autism Program at Hackensack Meridian Children's Health is a collaborative initiative among the two children's hospitals that make up the network. The CAC certification is the latest initiative undertaken by the multidisciplinary group of physicians, nurses, behaviorists and physical medicine specialists who are working to meet the needs of the more than 7,000 families with autistic individuals that it serves. Through a partnership with EmpowerU, families and caregivers can enroll in a free text message platform that provides personalized health information and connections to resources, available at all 18 Hackensack Meridian Health hospitals. Another resource for parents and caregivers to utilize while waiting to see a developmental pediatrician is called the 'The Coping Passport Program,' which is a series of questions including healthcare history, communication preferences, and more. The passport is meant to support patients with additional needs, including but not limited to autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, anxiety and ADHD. The Pediatric Emergency Department at Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital at Hackensack Meridian Children's Health also offers sensory carts, which help provide convenient access to a variety of calming activities.

"We understand how important it is that autistic patients feel safe and supported when they seek medical care in various settings. That's why we design our training programs to empower staff to improve communication with patients and achieve better outcomes," says IBCCES board chairman, Myron Pincomb. "We're excited about the implementation of our training at the Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital Pediatric ER, creating a more accommodating environment for autistic patients and their caregivers."

IBCCES has been an industry leader for more than 20 years in cognitive disorder training and certification for education, health care, and corporate professionals around the globe. The organization provides evidence-based training and certification programs created in conjunction with clinical experts and the perspectives of autistic individuals, alongside other resources, ongoing support and renewal requirements to ensure there is continued learning and a lasting impact.

IBCCES also created [CertifiedAutismCenter.com](https://www.CertifiedAutismCenter.com), as a free online resource for parents that lists certified locations and professionals. Each organization listed on the site has met the Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) requirements.

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## About IBCCES:

Committed to providing The Global Standard for Training and Certification in The Field of Cognitive Disorders – IBCCES provides a series of certifications that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. These programs are recognized around the world as the leading benchmark for training and certification in the areas of autism and other cognitive disorders.

## About Hackensack Meridian Children's Health

Hackensack Meridian Children's Health provides the most comprehensive and highest level of quality care to young patients in the state of New Jersey. The children's network is comprised of two children's hospitals – Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital at Hackensack University Medical Center in Hackensack and K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital at Jersey Shore University Medical Center in Neptune – and a large network of pediatric subspecialists and pediatricians. Both hospitals ranked #1 in New Jersey in the U.S. News World Report 2023-24 Best Children's Hospital Report. The combined cancer, nephrology, neurology & neurosurgery, and urology programs at both hospitals ranked among the top 50 in the nation in the U.S. News & World Report. Visit [www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/kids](http://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/kids) for more information about Hackensack Meridian Children's Health.

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