



Southwest  
Autism  
Research &  
Resource  
Center

Christopher J. Smith, Ph.D.  
Director of Research  
602-218-8192  
602-218-8175  
csmith@autismcenter.org

June 12, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

As vice president and director of research at the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center, I am in full support of the proposal entitled 'Improving Military Families' Access to Autism Health Care via Telehealth.' As the rates of autism continue to rise, wait lists for diagnosis and intervention become dramatically longer. We know from decades of research that early identification and intervention can change (and sometimes prevent) the course of this disorder. Longer wait lists are counter productive and are contributing to this growing societal issue. Thus, it is important to utilize cutting-edge telemedicine technology to address this issue.

My dedication to this critical area of study is due to Ron Oberleitner and Caring Technologies, Inc. I first met Ron in 2006, and became increasingly involved in the testing and developing of Caring Technologies' Behavior Imaging services. More recently, I attended a think tank summit hosted by Boise State University and Caring Technologies, and continue to be impressed by the potential of this technology to augment health and education. The technology Ron and Caring Technologies are pioneering has tremendous potential to solve problems and benefit many populations in need.

At SARRC we utilize several of Caring Technologies' services in both clinical programs and research projects. We use B.I. Capture in our preschool setting, and other schools off-site, where our clients with autism are educated. We are conducting a pilot project with B.I. Care to develop a procedure for diagnosing autism based on behaviors that occur in naturalistic settings. Examples of such behaviors videotaped and sent to our diagnostic team for careful review and annotation with B.I. Care. Additionally, we are using B.I. Care technology to provide follow up support to parents who completed a week long intensive parent training. This last project improves the access to effective intervention services to families who live in remote areas, far away from clinical sites.

The application in remote diagnosis and treatment is especially beneficial primarily because 1) families' travel is greatly reduced, 2) families have improved access to professionals, 3) time and travel costs are significantly reduced, and 4) most importantly, my staff was able to work with clinically relevant, natural-environment behavioral data which would have been impossible to obtain and communicate any other way. Just as our own experiences have proven, the applications suggested in this grant will help medical doctors improve their own abilities to treat ongoing medication issues more effectively and with less of a burden to families.

The possibilities for Behavior Imaging technology to improve the quality of life for the autism population are endless. I am pleased to support and endorse a project that applies this technology to families, particularly those in the military, a valued national asset. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 602-218-8192.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Christopher J. Smith, Ph.D.  
Vice President & Director of Research

300 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85006

Phone (602) 340-8717  
Fax (602) 340-8720  
www.autismcenter.org