

My name is Nicole Chalmers. I run a non-profit for autism called MAXimum Chances in the Dallas Fort Worth area. I would like to address the topic of autism specifically today as you regard the appointment of the new medical board of Texas.

My son Max is 13 years old and played 7<sup>th</sup> grade football this year. A fairly unremarkable statistic in the state of Texas except that Max has autism and didn't talk until the age of 3. Of course Max would be considered a highly functioning child with autism. This is no accident. Since his diagnosis at the age of 22 months Max has undertaken all the usual therapies they recommend for autism but hands down the MOST essential intervention has been biomedical.

These treatments we have undertaken however are NOT considered mainstream by the American academy of pediatrics, national institute of health or the CDC.

All agencies agree that autism appears to be a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Millions of dollars spent on genetic research have failed to provide families with any definitive answers.

The Autism Research Institute says that a few of the suspected environmental causes for which there is some scientific evidence include food allergies, heavy metal toxicity and pesticides.

This is not news to a great number of parents across the country whose children have been treated with protocols created by doctors that are considered to be integrative physicians. This integrative approach takes into account the function of the body as a whole and works to address the underlying causes rather than create bandaids for the symptoms.

For the autism community, the group of MD's that have worked diligently to look outside the box and examine the medical conditions that affect SO many children with autism has

been a lifeline. They understand the abnormalities with these children's immune systems and severe gut issues. The chronic methylation issues, severe sleep disorders, recurrent ear and strep infections.

These integrative doctors are being targeted for their protocols that involve immune therapy, heavy metal detoxification and altered diets. They are fined for even suggesting that nutrition may play a role in healing the gut. As a parent who has followed these protocols with great success with my child I find it extremely worrisome that the only physicians that are actually helping our children are being threatened.

With 1 in 68 children on the autism spectrum and 1 in 42 boys, chances of you NOT knowing a family affected by this are slim. If you DO NOT have an affected child there is a good chance your next generation will be impacted.

There are 27, 959, 150 people in the state of Texas, think of how many of those are children and the effect of autism on this state alone. With the appointment of your new medical board you have the opportunity to choose physicians that will support and empower the direction of the care of these children. SO much science to support these protocols is being ignored.

PLEASE PLEASE be a part of the solution for the state of Texas moving forward. We DO have an autism epidemic and it has no intention of waiting for us to catch up.

Thank you for your time.