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April is Autism Awareness Month

April marks Autism Awareness Month, dedicated to the recognition of Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), a neurodevelopmental disorder which affects as many as 1 out of 68 children in the United States today. Across Missouri and throughout the country during April, events occur to help raise awareness and bring focus on autism as a growing public health crisis.

Kevin and Avonte's Law was Passed

Kevin and Avonte's Law, which was included in the 2018 Omnibus bill, was recently passed by the House and Senate and signed into law by President Trump. Kevin and Avonte's Law is named in honor of two boys with autism who died after wandering from safety. This bipartisan bill applies proven community alert systems to help locate people with autism, Alzheimer's, dementia, and related disorders who may be susceptible to wandering away from safety. It also supports training for first responders and other community officials to better prevent and respond to these cases. The Senate Judiciary Committee's report is available [here](#).

Autism Spectrum Disorder Training for Public Safety

The Department of Mental Health, Office of Autism Services, in partnership with the University of Missouri Extension, Fire and Rescue Training Institute produced *Autism Spectrum Disorder Training for Public Safety*, a web-based training module that meets continuing education requirements for Missouri peace officers and emergency medical services personnel. This web-based training contains video footage provided by Dennis Debbaudt, a national expert on the topic of law enforcement interactions with individuals on the autism spectrum and father of a son with autism. The online training is available [here](#).