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School Nurses Autism Packet Now Available

Released by Autism Alliance of MetroWest

Framingham, Massachusetts, July 30, 2009...The Autism Alliance of MetroWest is pleased to announce it's releasing an educational School Nurses Autism Packet to schools for the new academic year.

The Autism Alliance, which recently established an affiliation with Advocates, Inc. of Framingham, custom designed the packets for elementary school nurses. The packets include key information about autism and six re-usable social scripts featuring Picture Communication Symbols, drawings licensed by DynaVox Mayer-Johnson that help children with little or no speech communicate.

The autism packet also features tools to alleviate student stress during the visit and forms that can be filled out, so students, nurses, teachers and parents can later reflect upon and understand the visit.

"About half the children with autism in elementary schools are non-verbal," said Nannette Ohman, executive director of the Autism Alliance. "They can't go home and tell their parents why they went to the nurse that day. This packet goes a long way in answering questions and building a foundation for the next visit."

The Autism Alliance began developing the packets a couple years ago after Ohman led a training seminar for the Massachusetts School Nurse Organization and was told nurses needed more guidance on treating students with autism.

The Framingham Union Aid Association provided funding for the Autism Alliance to test the packets in Natick and Framingham elementary schools last year.

Encouraged by the positive results, the Autism Alliance now hopes to expand its work to local pediatrician offices over the next year.

The autism packets are now widely available for sale on the Autism Alliance's website at www.autismalliance.org, by emailing autismalliance@earthlink.net or calling 508.652.9900.

About the Autism Alliance of MetroWest

Founded in 1993 on the belief that information is the most powerful tool for living with autism, the Autism Alliance of MetroWest provides resources, education and support to over 860 area families. It maintains an education and resource center with over 800 up-to-date publications available for check-out at the Morse Institute Library in Natick. For more information, visit www.autismalliance.org.

About Advocates, Inc.

Advocates, Inc., headquartered in Framingham, is among the 20 largest human service organizations in Massachusetts. With a staff of over 1,000, Advocates is a leading provider of residential support services; outpatient mental health and substance abuse services; intensive home-based intervention for individuals and families; job training and support; housing, benefits and legal services; and community justice programs. Advocates provides services at sites throughout Eastern and Central Massachusetts.

More information is available at www.AdvocatesInc.org

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