

Navigating the Path Forward: Advancing and Thriving in Uncertain Times

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Ms. Osbourn has worked with individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual disabilities her entire career. She is the current Associate Director of the Center for Development & Disability (CDD); the Director of the Autism & Other Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Division and the Program Director for NM START. She joined the CDD in 1990, serving as a speech-language pathologist on an interdisciplinary diagnostic team that provided birth – 3 evaluations statewide. In 1994, she joined the Autism Programs at the CDD; she and the Center director founded the first Autism Clinic in the state providing evaluations across the lifespan. Her experience in this clinic revealed the lack of supports for individuals with ASD in New Mexico and led her to seek funding for training and consultation for early intervention and school personnel. She began as the director of the Autism Programs in 2000 and has supported its growth since that time. Currently, the Autism Programs has approximately 75 interdisciplinary professionals who provide clinical services, training and consultation and resources. All services are statewide, allowing the program to constantly adjust to the changing needs of the population of New Mexico.

Ms. Osbourn continues to learn from and is guided by the families and individuals served through the Autism Programs; programming is always based on needs identified by families/individuals. The NM START program was developed based on New Mexicans who have not been well served; many of these individuals with ASD and mental health needs have been sent to residential treatment centers out of state. While some placements have yielded successful outcomes, more often than not they have led to trauma for the individual as well as their families. It is hoped that as our START program continues to develop and serve individuals and their systems that more New Mexicans will receive appropriate care in their communities without the need for out of state placements.