Statement of the Autism Society of America Regarding Recent Remarks by a Federal Agency Official

Bethesda, MD. July 18, 2018 -- Last week, Mary Lazare, who serves as Principal Deputy Administrator for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Community Living (ACL), made remarks at the Autism Society of America’s annual conference.

Principal Deputy Administrator Lazare discussed ACL’s efforts on a wide range of issues, including housing and community-based settings. Since her remarks, some disability advocates and a few Members of Congress have voiced concerns about ACL’s commitment to community living and the U.S. Supreme Court Olmstead decision.

ACL has since reaffirmed the agency’s commitment to supporting community integration in a number of messages through the ACL Twitter account. ACL has also agreed to meet with leaders of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD).

The Autism Society is pleased that ACL has provided a statement of clarification regarding the agency’s mission and goals. Our organization also appreciates ACL’s willingness to meet with members of the disability community to further discuss these issues and how we can continue to work together to increase quality home and community-based housing and long term services and supports.

The nation’s attention must be directed to helping the thousands of individuals with developmental and other disabilities who are on long waiting lists for home and community-based services. More funding and other resources must be directed to quality community-based services. The Autism Society looks forward to continuing to work with the Administration and Congress to address these needs.

The Autism Society is a nonpartisan organization representing over 80 affiliates providing advocacy and direct services to the millions of individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities nationwide.

For more information about the Autism Society, please visit the website that contains many resources for individuals and families. Our public policy site contains our position statements on community living and other important quality of life issues.