

ACCESS to ABA in IOWA

What is Applied Behavior Analysis?

- A highly researched science of increasing behaviors that are helpful and important to the learner while decreasing behaviors that are harmful or affect learning negatively.

What is the State already doing to support this?

- Medicaid coverage with Medicaid eligibility.
- Not a waiver service but can be eligible with a waiver.
- Insurance mandate passed effective Jan 2018.
- Autism Support Program funding since 2014.

What impact did the Insurance legislation have?

- We saw an increase in the number of families without Medicaid who have some coverage, and a large increase in those with Medicaid as the secondary payer, so insurance is paying the bulk of the costs.
- We saw some families go off ASP funding because their family insurance was required to cover ABA. Sometimes, the family's out of pocket amount, through deductibles, co-pay or co-insurance turned out to be significantly higher than their parent pay portion under ASP.

What is the Autism Support Program (ASP)?

- Funding set aside to help provide access to ABA treatment. It includes a sliding scale for a parent payment portion, and has limitations of not more than \$36,000 per year and not more than 24 months of treatment for children up to age 14 at time of application.
- Eligibility
 - Not on Medicaid
 - No medical insurance that covers ABA
 - Meets financial eligibility requirements (5X poverty rate).

What are we requesting?

- Allow families who would be financially eligible for ASP funds but have gotten insurance, to have assistance with out of pocket expenses that exceed what they would pay as the parent portion if they did not have insurance. Parent portions range from 0 to 15% of cost.
- Consider eligibility if the insurance only allows the benefits through an in-network provider and no in-network provider exists.

Reaching Rural Iowa

Currently a very small fraction of the children who could benefit from ABA access it. Why?

- Shortage of providers in state
- Shortage of BCBA's
- Intensive intervention with daily treatment the norm

What action steps are currently being taken?

- Support of the development of BCBA's comes through a grant program to provide tuition reimbursement. This money came out of money for ASP programming. Have 17 grants awarded.
- Have only released the grant 2 times since 2016. Offering it more often would be beneficial.

Models that include telehealth are viable in Iowa but not always funded by all payers.

- The Iowa Autism Council has recommended telehealth as a possible alternative for rural locations.
- The University of Iowa is among those who have proven the effectiveness of ABA telehealth through research projects.
- Telehealth can be used to provide ongoing, real time coaching to parents who are working with their own child in their own home as a cost efficient method of support.

Who is allowing it?

- It has been approved under the Autism Support Program in the past
- MCO's are not consistent in whether they cover it

Conflicts and Confusion:

- Last year passed HF 2305 Telehealth Act directing insurance coverage to include telehealth, effective Jan 2019
- DHS issued IL 1978-MCO-FFS with restrictions on originating locations which would require families to travel to location to participate
- IL 1978 provides a list of providers that includes other Behavior Health professionals, but does not include BCBA's. This leads to an exclusion of BCBA's.
- Iowa Medicaid's recent interpretation of the new billing codes issues by American Medical Association is that telehealth is not included.

What are requesting?

Clarification of the intention of the state that Medicaid paid ABA services include telehealth models that are provided remotely by a BCBA with the result of reducing family travel, making it more accessible to families who do not have a provider within easy daily driving distance.