

## Department Of Defense (DoD) Enhanced Access To Autism Services Demonstration

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### 1.0 PURPOSE

The Enhanced Access to Autism Services Demonstration (“Autism Demonstration”) offers a supplemental benefit for Active Duty Family Members (ADFM) with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by allowing bachelors-level Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBAs) and paraprofessional “ABA Tutors” working under the supervision of masters-level Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) or doctoral-level Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA-Ds) to conduct Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) reinforcement that is often provided by parents. This Autism Demonstration will enable the DoD to determine whether:

- Provision of ABA reinforcement by BCaBAs and ABA Tutors acting as “surrogate parental interventionists” can effectively offset the difficulty active duty family parents, one or both of whom may be deployed away from home for months at a time, have in using ABA reinforcement techniques collaboratively, consistently, and intensely when interacting with their children who have ASDs; and
- Use of BCaBAs and ABA Tutors results in increased access to services for ADFMs with an ASD; and
- An increased number of services, when provided by supervised BCaBAs and non-certified ABA Tutors results in increased military readiness. This may be measured by determining if the parents of ADFMs with an ASD consider the increased access to have a positive effect upon the family; and
- Military readiness is increased. This may be measured by determining if Active Duty Service Members (ADSMs) consider the increased access to services provided by the Autism Demonstration as making it more likely that they will remain on active duty.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

**2.1** The Military Health System (MHS) includes 59 military hospitals, over 350 military health clinics, and an extensive network of private sector health care partners, that provides medical care for more than nine million beneficiaries, including ADSMs and ADFMs.

**2.2** ASDs affect essential human behaviors such as social interaction, the ability to communicate ideas and feelings, imagination, and the establishment of relationships with others. For a description of ASD and applicable diagnostic codes, see the TRICARE Policy Manual (TPM), Chapter 7, Section 3.18.

**2.3** Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) has been introduced to ameliorate the negative impact of autism. Currently, ABA is accepted within the MHS as having been shown to reduce or eliminate specific problem behaviors and teach new skills to individuals with ASD. ABA reinforcement requires family member involvement as the parent(s) or caregiver(s) must consistently implement the ABA reinforcement interventions in the home setting in accordance with the prescribed treatment plan.

ADFM's wanting to participate in the Autism Demonstration must meet all requirements for the authorization and provision of ABA under the TRICARE Basic Program outlined in the TPM, Chapter 7, Section 3.18.

**2.4** Under the Autism Demonstration, ABA reinforcement is rendered by "surrogate parental interventionists" (ABA Tutors) as an "other service" benefit under the provisions of the Extended Care Health Option (ECHO). Only those individuals who meet the requirements specified in paragraph 3.4, working under the supervisory oversight of an ABA provider licensed or certified by a State or certified by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) (<http://www.bacb.com>) as a BCBA are eligible to provide ABA reinforcement.

**2.5** The BCBA's clinical, supervisory, and case management activities are often supported by other staff such as Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBA) working within the scope of their training, practice, and competence. The BCaBA assists BCBA's or BCBA-D's in various roles and responsibilities as determined appropriate by BCBA's or BCBA-D's and delegated to the BCaBA. Under the Autism Demonstration, the BCaBA serves in a clinical support role and is not authorized to supervise ABA Tutors independently. BCaBA's may provide ABA reinforcement for more complex cases. The BCBA or BCBA-D is ultimately responsible for all aspects of case management and clinical direction. Only those individuals who meet the requirements specified in paragraph 3.3, working under the supervisory oversight of an ABA provider licensed or certified by a State or certified by the BACB (<http://www.bacb.com>) as a BCBA or BCBA-D (ABA Supervisors) are eligible to provide ABA reinforcement.

**2.6** The Autism Demonstration allows TRICARE reimbursement for ABA reinforcement delivered by supervised bachelor's level BCaBA's and paraprofessional providers (ABA Tutors) under a modified Corporate Services Provider (CSP) model that: (a) meets the TRICARE definition of a CSP under 32 CFR 199.6(e)(2)(ii)(B); (b) predominantly renders services of a type uniquely allowable under the FY2013 NDAA, Section 705; and (c) meets the requirements specified in paragraph 3.1.

### **3.0 ABA PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS**

#### **3.1 Autism Demonstration Corporate Services Provider (ACSP)**

ACSPs shall:

**3.1.1** Submit evidence to the Managed Care Support Contractor (MCSC) that professional liability insurance in the amounts of one million dollars per claim and three million dollars in aggregate, unless State requirements specify greater amounts, is maintained in the ACSP's name.

**3.1.2** Submit claims to the appropriate MCSC using the assigned Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) and Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes specified in paragraph 6.0.

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- 3.1.3** Submit to the MCSC all documents necessary to support an application for designation as a TRICARE ACSP; and
- 3.1.4** Enter into a Participation Agreement ([Addendum A](#)) approved by the Director, TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) or designee; and
- 3.1.5** Employ directly or contract with **ABA Supervisors, BCaBAs** and/or **ABA Tutors**; and
- 3.1.6** Certify that all **ABA Supervisors, BCaBAs** and/or **ABA Tutors** employed by or contracted with the ACSP meet the education, training, experience, competency, supervision and **Autism Demonstration** requirements specified herein; and
- 3.1.7** Comply with all applicable organizational and individual licensing or certification requirements that are extant in the State, county, municipality, or other political jurisdiction in which **ABA reinforcement** is provided under the **Autism Demonstration**; and
- 3.1.8** Maintain employment or contractual documentation in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local requirements and corporate policies regarding **ABA Supervisors, BCaBAs** and **ABA Tutors**; and
- 3.1.9** Comply with all applicable requirements of the Government designated utilization and clinical quality management organization for the geographic area in which the ACSP provides **ABA reinforcement**; and
- 3.1.10** Comply with all other requirements applicable to TRICARE-authorized providers.
- 3.2 ABA Supervisor shall:**
- 3.2.1** Have a master's degree or above in a qualifying field as defined by the BACB; and
- 3.2.2** Have a current, unrestricted State-issued license to provide ABA; or
- 3.2.3** Have a current, unrestricted State-issued certificate as a provider of ABA; or
- 3.2.4** Have a current certification from BACB (<http://www.bacb.com>) as either a BCBA or a **BCBA-D** where such state-issued license or certification is not available; and
- 3.2.5** Enter into a Participation Agreement ([Addendum A](#)) approved by the Director, TMA or designee; and
- 3.2.6** Employ directly or contract with **BCaBAs** and **ABA Tutors**; and
- 3.2.7** Report to the MCSC within 30 days of notification of a BACB sanction issued to the **ABA Supervisor** for violation of BACB disciplinary standards (<http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=85>) or notification of loss of BACB certification. Loss of BACB certification shall result in termination of the Participation Agreement with the **ABA Supervisor** with an effective date of such notification. Termination of the Participation Agreement by the MCSC may be appealed to the TMA in accordance with the requirements of [Chapter 13](#); and

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**3.2.8** Ensure that the quality of the **ABA reinforcement** provided by **BCaBAs and ABA Tutors** meet the minimum evidence-based standards as indicated by the current BACB Task List, the BACB Professional Disciplinary Standards, the BACB Guidelines for Responsible Conduct for Behavior Analysts, and current BACB rules and regulations; and

**3.2.9** Maintain all applicable business licenses and employment or contractual documentation in accordance with Federal, State, and local requirements and the **ABA Supervisor's** business policies regarding **BCaBAs and ABA Tutors**; and

**3.2.10** Meet all applicable requirements of the states in which they provide **ABA reinforcement**, including those of states in which they provide remote supervision of **BCaBAs and ABA Tutors** and oversee **ABA reinforcement** provided where the beneficiary resides; and

**3.2.11** Cooperate fully with a designated utilization and clinical quality management organization which has a contract with the DoD for the geographic area in which the provider does business; and

**3.2.12** Comply with all other applicable requirements to TRICARE-authorized providers.

**3.2.13** Comply with TRICARE documentation requirements as specified in TPM, Chapter 1, Section 5.1.

**3.3** Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA) shall:

**Note:** A BCaBA (bachelor's level) is not authorized to be an ABA Supervisor, see paragraph 2.5.

**3.3.1** Have a bachelor's degree or above in a qualifying field as defined by the BACB; and

**3.3.2** Have a current, unrestricted State-issued license to provide ABA; or

**3.3.3** Have a current, unrestricted State-issued certificate as a provider of ABA; or

**3.3.4** Have a current certification from BACB.

**3.4 ABA Tutor Shall:**

**3.4.1** Have documented evidence verifying completion of the 40 hours of classroom training provided by a BCBA or BCBA-D trainer, maintained by the ABA supervisor and the ABA Tutor, and shall include:

- Dates and times of training sessions; and
- Signature of the trainer and the ABA Tutor attendee on a sign-in sheet; and
- A course description to include course objectives, a syllabus outlining course content and an evaluation process to measure successful completion; and
- Course content, at minimum must include training on behavior analyst principles, crisis behavior management and HIPAA.

**3.4.2** Prior to providing **supervised ABA reinforcement** under the **Autism** Demonstration, have completed 40 hours of classroom training in ABA techniques in accordance with the BACB Guidelines for Responsible Conduct for Behavior Analysts (<http://www.bacb.com>), undergone a **Criminal History Review** as specified in [paragraph 3.5](#); and

- Completed a minimum of 12 semester hours of college coursework in psychology, education, social work, behavioral sciences, human development or related fields and be currently enrolled in a course of study leading to an associate's or bachelor's degree by an accredited college or university; or
- Completed a minimum of 48 semester hours of college courses in an accredited college or university; or
- A High School diploma or GED equivalent and have completed 500 hours of employment providing **supervised ABA reinforcement** as verified by the ACSP.

**3.4.3** Receive **one hour of direct supervision per month per 10 hours of weekly ABA reinforcement** from the **ABA Supervisor** with each beneficiary **to whom the ABA Tutor provides ABA reinforcement** in accordance with the BACB Guidelines for Responsible Conduct for Behavior Analysts. **Requests for additional supervision in excess of one hour supervision per 10 hours of ABA reinforcement per week of supervision must be coordinated with the MCSC.** Remote supervision through the use of real time methods is authorized. For the purpose of this paragraph, "real-time" is defined as the simultaneous "live" audio and video interaction between the **ABA Supervisor** and the **ABA Tutor** by electronic means such that the occurrence is the same as if the individuals were in the physical presence of each other. Such is usually done by electronic transmission over the internet.

### **3.5 Provider Background Review**

**3.5.1** The MCSC shall obtain a Criminal History Review, as specified in [Chapter 4, Section 1, paragraph 9.0](#), for ACSPs who are individual providers with whom the MCSC enters into a Participation Agreement.

**3.5.2** ACSPs, other than those specified in [paragraph 3.5.1](#), shall:

**3.5.2.1** Obtain a Criminal History Review of **ABA Supervisors** whom the ACSP employs directly or with whom the ACSP enters into a contract.

**3.5.2.2** Obtain a Criminal Background Check of **BCaBAs and ABA Tutors** whom the ACSP employs directly or with whom the ACSP enters into a contract.

**3.5.3** The **ABA Supervisor** shall obtain a Criminal Background Check of **BCaBAs and ABA Tutors** the **ABA Supervisor** employs directly or with whom the **ABA Supervisor** enters into a contract to supervise the **BCaBAs and ABA Tutors**. The Criminal Background Check of **BCaBAs and ABA Tutors** shall:

**3.5.3.1** Include current Federal, State, and County Criminal and Sex Offender reports for all locations the **BCaBAs and ABA Tutors** has resided or worked during the previous 10 years; and

**3.5.3.2** Be completed prior to the **BCaBAs and ABA Tutors** providing **ABA reinforcement** to TRICARE beneficiaries.

#### **4.0 BENEFICIARY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

**4.1** TRICARE beneficiaries who request participation in the **Autism** Demonstration shall:

**4.1.1** Be at least 18 months of age; and

**4.1.2** Be registered in the ECHO; and

**4.1.3** Have been diagnosed with an ASD specified in **the TPM, Chapter 7, Section 3.18** by a TRICARE-authorized **Physician Primary Care Manager (P-PCM)** (for the purposes of the diagnosis of ASD, TRICARE authorized P-PCMs include: TRICARE authorized family practice, internal medicine and pediatric physicians whether they work in the purchased care or direct care system, In cases where the beneficiary does not have a P-PCM (as is sometimes the case for beneficiaries with TRICARE Prime Remote (TPR)), the diagnosis may be rendered by a TRICARE authorized physician in any of the disciplines described above under P-PCM, or by a TRICARE authorized specialty ASD provider) or Specialized ASD Provider; and

**4.1.4** Meet all requirements outlined in the TPM, Chapter 7, Section 3.18 including referral, authorization, initial assessment and treatment plan, and updated treatment plan.

**4.2** Eligibility for benefits under the **Autism** Demonstration ceases as of 12:01 a.m. of the day after the end of:

- The **Autism** Demonstration, or
- Eligibility for the ECHO.

**4.3** Absence of eligibility for the **Autism** Demonstration does not preclude **eligible** beneficiaries from receiving otherwise allowable services under TRICARE.

#### **5.0 POLICY**

**5.1** Under the **Autism** Demonstration, TRICARE will reimburse ACSP's only for **ABA reinforcement** that meet the minimum standards established by the current BACB Task List, the BACB Professional Disciplinary Standards, the BACB Guidelines for Responsible Conduct for Behavior Analysts, and current BACB rules and regulations when rendered by **BCaBAs and ABA Tutors** who meet all applicable requirements specified herein.

**5.2** All **ABA reinforcement** under this **Autism** Demonstration require prior written authorization by the Director, TMA or designee (i.e., the **MCSCs**) in accordance with the requirements outlined in **TPM, Chapter 7, Section 3.18**.

**5.3** The following are eligible for reimbursement, **payable only to the ACSP or BCBA/BCBA-D** under the **Autism** Demonstration:

**5.3.1** **ABA reinforcement** rendered directly to a TRICARE beneficiary on a one-on-one basis by a **BCaBA or non-certified ABA Tutor under the supervision of an ABA provider licensed or certified by**

a State or certified by the BACB (<http://www.bacb.com>) as a BCBA. Group ABA reinforcement is not a TRICARE benefit.

**5.3.2** ABA reinforcement rendered jointly, in-person, during directly supervised fieldwork of the BCaBA or ABA Tutor by the ABA Supervisor. Only the services provided by the Supervisor will be reimbursed as specified in [paragraph 6.1.1](#).

**5.4** The allowed cost of services provided by this Autism Demonstration on or after October 14, 2008, accrue to the government's maximum fiscal year share of providing benefits in accordance with the TPM, [Chapter 9](#), (except ECHO Home Health Care (EHHC)), of \$36,000.

## **6.0 REIMBURSEMENT**

**6.1** Claims for Autism Demonstration services will be submitted by the ACSP on a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) 1500 (08/05). Reimbursement is payable only to the ACSP or BCBA/BCBA-D, not to the BCaBAs or ABA Tutors. The following codes have been adopted for non-standardized usage for ABA reinforcement provided under the Autism Demonstration. These codes apply for provision of ABA reinforcement in all authorized settings (the office, home or community setting):

**6.1.1** ABA reinforcement rendered jointly by an ABA Supervisor and a BCaBA or ABA Tutor, in-person, during directly supervised fieldwork of the BCaBA or ABA Tutor by the ABA Supervisor, will be invoiced using HCPCS code "S5108, Home care training to home care client, per 15 minutes." Supervision means direct one-on-one supervision of ABA Tutors implementing the treatment plan in person or through real time remote means. The supervised field work of the ABA supervisor and BCaBA or ABA Tutor are reimbursed as one unit of service. Under no circumstance will TRICARE reimburse more than \$125 to the ABA supervisor.

**6.1.2** ABA reinforcement provided directly by a BCaBA or an ABA Tutor will be invoiced using HCPCS code "H2019, Therapeutic behavioral services, per 15 minutes."

**6.2** Reimbursement of claims in accordance with [paragraphs 6.1.1 and 6.1.2](#) will be the lesser of:

- The CHAMPUS Maximum Allowable Charge (CMAC); or
- \$125 per hour for services provided by the ABA Supervisor, \$75 for services provided by a BCaBA, and/or \$50 per hour for services provided by the ABA Tutor; or
- The negotiated rate; or
- The billed charge.

## **7.0 ADDITIONAL MCSC RESPONSIBILITIES**

The MCSC shall:

**7.1** Ensure all requirements outlined in the TPM, [Chapter 7, Section 3.18](#) to include referral, authorization, initial assessment and treatment plan, and updated treatment plan are met when authorizing supplemental ABA reinforcement under the Autism Demonstration.

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- 7.2** Maintain all documents related to the **Autism** Demonstration in accordance with **Chapter 2**.
- 7.3** Forward to the "gaining" MCSC all **Autism** Demonstration related documents within 10 calendar days of being notified that a beneficiary is transferring to a location under the jurisdiction of another MCSC.
- 7.4** Conduct annual audits on at least 20% of each ACSP's **BCaBA and ABA** Tutors for compliance with the requirements specified in **paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4**. Upon determining non-compliance with one or more **BCaBA and ABA** Tutor qualification requirements, the MCSC will immediately initiate a compliance audit of all **ABA** Tutors employed by or contracted with that ACSP.
- 7.5** Complete and submit the monthly, quarterly, and semi-annual reports as described in the Contract Data Requirements List (CDRL), DD Form 1423.
- 7.6** Follow the quality assurance procedures outlined in **TPM, Chapter 7, Section 3.18**.
- 7.7** Ensure all TRICARE Encounter Data (TED) requirements outlined in the TRICARE Systems Manual (TSM), **Chapter 2** are met.

#### **8.0 APPLICABILITY**

- 8.1** This **Autism** Demonstration is limited to TRICARE beneficiaries who meet the requirements specified in **paragraph 4.0**.
- 8.2** This **Autism** Demonstration is limited to the 50 United States and the District of Columbia.

#### **9.0 EXCLUSIONS**

TRICARE will not cost-share **under this Autism Demonstration**:

- 9.1** Training of **ABA** Tutors as specified in **paragraph 3.4.2**.
- 9.2** **ABA** provided exclusively under the TRICARE Basic benefit in accordance with **TPM, Chapter 7, Section 3.18**.
- 9.3** Any exclusions under **TPM, Chapter 7, Section 3.18**.
- 9.4** Group supervision of **ABA** Tutors.
- 9.5** **ABA** reinforcement provided to more than one beneficiary at a time.
- 9.6** Billing for e-mails and phone calls.
- 9.7** Billing for office supplies or therapeutic supplies (i.e., building blocks, stickers, crayons, etc.).
- 9.8** Billing for **ABA** reinforcement provided remotely through internet technology (Skype) to a parent working with their child.
- 9.9** Billing for **ABA** reinforcement involving aversive techniques.

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**10.0 EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Autism Demonstration is effective for claims for services provided in accordance with this Section effective July 25, 2013 through March 14, 2014. Claims for services during the period March 15, 2008 through July 25, 2013 will continue to be paid in accordance with the guidance provided in TOM, Change 68, published January 11, 2012.

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