



Network Notification

Notice Date: January 25, 2018
To: Georgia Medicaid Health Partners
From: CareSource®
Subject: New Applied Behavior Analysis/Services (ABA/ABS) Medical Policy
Effective Date: March 1, 2018

Effective March 1, 2018, CareSource is implementing a new medical policy to assist health partners who administer Applied Behavior Analysis/Services (ABA/ABS).

Following is a summary of the policy. You can access the policy in its entirety on the [Georgia Medicaid Health Partner Medical Policy](#) webpage.

CLINICAL SUMMARY

Applied Behavior Analysis/Services (ABA/ABS) is used to treat childhood pervasive developmental disorders, including autism spectrum disorder.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can vary widely in severity and symptoms, depending on the developmental level and chronological age of the patient. Autism is often defined by specific impairments that affect socialization, communication, and stereotyped (repetitive) behavior, which collectively are called the “Core” symptoms of autism.

Children with autism spectrum disorders have pervasive, clinically significant deficits which are present in early childhood in areas such as intellectual functioning, language, social communication and interactions, as well as restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests and activities. Individuals with a well-established diagnosis of autistic disorder, Asperger’s disorder, or pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified under previous diagnostic criteria should be given the diagnosis of ASD.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Prior authorization is required for ABA services provided to CareSource members. Please refer to the policy for the required documentation to obtain prior authorization, including the policy’s Attachment A, Prior Authorization Checklist.
- CareSource supports early intervention services and therapies, such as physical, speech and occupational therapy, as well as psychological/psychiatric services, for the treatment of autism spectrum disorders.
- CareSource provides for state and federal required covered services as part of a comprehensive plan of treatment for autism spectrum disorders when ordered by a licensed physician who specializes in treating children, child neurologist or child psychiatrist and provided/supervised by a certified, credentialed and/or licensed CareSource participating BCBA at the Doctorate or Master’s degree level.
- The policy details the clinical requirements around diagnosis, treatment, plans of care, and initial and ongoing documentation.

- ABA/ABS treatment is not covered for symptoms and/or behaviors that are not part of core symptoms of autism (e.g., impulsivity due to ADHD, reading difficulties due to learning disabilities or excessive worry due to an anxiety disorder). Additional services will be considered to treat symptoms not associated with autism.
- ABA/ABS treatment should be focused on addressing symptoms and behaviors which are impeding the child's functions in the home environment, rather than in the academic environment.
- ABA/ABS treatment is not covered for more than one program manager/lead behavioral therapist for a member at any one time.
- ABA/ABS treatment is not covered for more than one agency/organization providing ABA services for a member at any one time.
- ABA/ABS treatment is not indicated nor will it be covered for activities and therapy modalities that do not constitute application of ABA/ABS analysis techniques for treatment of autism. Please refer to the policy for a list of some of the examples of these non-covered activities and therapies.

If required, providers must submit their prior authorization number, their claim form, as well as appropriate HCPCS and/or CPT codes along with appropriate modifiers in accordance with CMS.

Claims not meeting the necessary criteria as described in the policy document will be denied.

Please contact Health Partner Services at **1-855-202-1058** if you have questions about this policy.