Date

Your Name

Your Address

Your City, State

Zip code

Your E-mail

Your Phone Number

Dear [COMPANY OR HR CONTACT],

I am a provider who services your company’s children diagnosed with autism. [YOUR COMPANY] provides medically essential applied behavior analysis (ABA) for the treatment of autism. Your employee’s child [or employees’ children] (my clients) have been receiving ABA through [COMPANY]’S health plan benefits. Since services began, the children I serve have learned the following skills: list all skills here. Their families report that their lives have improved in the following ways since ABA therapy began: list all the ways here. Interrupting this progress will interfere with their ability to continue to make gains thus potentially elongating stay of care. Additionally, many of my clients engage in behaviors that are life threatening such as self-injury and elopement. Impeding access to services greatly increases risks associated with [his/her] autism.

Since COVID-19 has come to the United States, our ABA services were significantly affected. Because of the pandemic, our services have had to change because list all the ways here.

We are still able to provide ABA services; however, one change in service delivery includes creating a schedule that rotates clients in and out of our clinic to reduce the number of individuals within a clinic at any given time. While this serves as a temporary solution, given the high volume of clients who access their benefits through self-funded employer plans, we have had to greatly reduce utilization of authorized hours in order to accommodate our emergency occupancy protocol. In some cases, we are no longer able to deliver services due to safety concerns regarding COVID-19. Families report that this abrupt interruption has negatively impacted their children by stalling progress and in many cases families are reporting observations of regression in their children.

Since the onset of the pandemic, most fully funded plans have authorized the use of telehealth services. However, many companies that self-fund their employee health plans have not yet authorized the delivery of services through telehealth. This means that my clients cannot more safely receive these medically essential services or that they can receive services, but at a much greater health risk. If we are forced to interrupt services due our efforts to minimize contact with others outside our household, we fear that our clients’ progress will either stagnate or deteriorate. Additionally, this impediment to service will likely occasion a longer need for services once the pandemic has ceased.

In February of 2019, the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) and the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts (APBA) released a statement clarifying some of the information in the Analysis Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder: Practice Guidelines for Healthcare Funders and Managers (2nd ed.)[[1]](#footnote-2). The statement says “The *Guidelines….*describe the many challenges faced by the caregivers of people with ASD and emphasize that training must be individualized to the caregivers’ needs, values, priorities, and circumstances.” They also provide the important reminder that “...while family training is supportive of the overall treatment plan, it is not a replacement for professionally directed and implemented treatment (p. 37).”

BlueSprig is grateful that [COMPANY] recognizes the importance of authorizing ABA for the treatment of autism. **We are requesting that [COMPANY] allows all service codes to be delivered via telehealth. All services are essential for my client to learn lifesaving skills.** [YOUR COMPANY] would also like to continue aligning with the CDC and WHO recommendations for limiting contact with anyone outside of our own homes. However, we must also consider the wellbeing of our clients and the risks associated with an interruption of services. [YOUR COMPANY] believes that jeopardizing our clients’ progress coupled with increasing the risk of a COVID 19 infection will create an undue burden not only on our family unite, but ultimately on [COMPANY]’s ability to continue to self-fund its employee health plan.

In March of 2020, the Council of Autism Service Providers (CASP) released a comprehensive resource for delivered telehealth services.[[2]](#footnote-3) The Practice Parameters for Telehealth ABA provide clear guidance on how to effectively administer ABA therapy for all service codes. They help payers, providers, and parents understand how to get the best results from services provided through telehealth.

**Would you consider the following?**

**1) Authorize all service codes to be delivered through telehealth.**

**2) Require that [COMPANY] reference the Practice Parameters when developing their policy for the other services delivered telehealth to ensure the policy reflects the best guidance available for effective rendering, treatment outcomes, and documentation of services.**

These modifications to the current [COMPANY] policy would allow all families to receive the access to care they deserve while supporting our flattening the curve. Please do what you can to ensure this happens as soon as possible. Every day that our clients lose the ability to get the full therapy they deserve can never be recovered, but if change happens quickly, we can move back to getting them the full treatment they need.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Type your name here

1. <https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/Clarifications_ASD_Practice_Guidelines_2nd_ed.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://casproviders.org/practice-parameters-for-telehealth/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)