

**DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY**

**Department of Health and Hospitals  
Bureau of Health Services Financing**

**Applied Behavior Analysis-Based Therapy Services  
(LAC 50:XV.Chapters 1-7)**

The Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Health Services Financing adopts LAC 50:XV.Chapters 1-7 in the Medical Assistance Program as authorized by R.S. 36:254 and pursuant to Title XIX of the Social Security Act. This Emergency Rule is promulgated in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:953(B)(1) et seq., and shall be in effect for the maximum period allowed under the Act or until adoption of the final Rule, whichever occurs first.

The Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Health Services Financing and the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities promulgated an Emergency Rule which amended the provisions of the Children's Choice Waiver in order to provide for the allocation of waiver opportunities to Medicaid-eligible children identified in the *Melanie Chisholm, et al vs. Kathy Kliebert* class action litigation (hereafter referred to as *Chisholm* class members) who have a diagnosis of pervasive developmental disorder or autism spectrum disorder, and are in need of applied behavior analysis-based (ABA) therapy services (*Louisiana Register*, Volume 39, Number 10). This action was taken as a temporary measure to ensure *Chisholm* class members would have access to ABA therapy services as soon as

possible.

To ensure continued, long-lasting access to ABA-based therapy services for *Chisholm* class members and other children under the age of 21, the department promulgated an Emergency Rule which adopted provisions to establish coverage and reimbursement for ABA-based therapy services under the Medicaid State Plan (*Louisiana Register*, Volume 40, Number 2). The department subsequently promulgated an Emergency Rule which amended the provisions of the February 1, 2014 Emergency Rule to ensure compliance with all of the provisions required by the court order issued in *Melanie Chisholm, et al vs. Kathy Kliebert* class action litigation (*Louisiana Register*, Volume 40, Number 10). This Emergency Rule is being promulgated to continue the provisions of the October 20, 2014 Emergency Rule.

This action is being taken to avoid imminent peril to the public health and welfare of children who are in immediate need of ABA-based therapy services, and to comply with the judge's order that these services be provided to *Chisholm* class members.

Effective February 18, 2015, the Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Health Services Financing amends the provisions governing applied behavior analysis services to clarify these provisions.

## **Title 50**

### **PUBLIC HEALTH-MEDICAL ASSISTANCE**

#### **Part XV. Services for Special Populations**

##### **Subpart 1. Applied Behavior Analysis-Based Therapy Services**

**Chapter 1. General Provisions**

**§101. Program Description and Purpose**

A. Applied behavior analysis-based (ABA) therapy is the design, implementation, and evaluation of environmental modification using behavioral stimuli and consequences to produce socially significant improvement in human behavior, including the direct observation, measurement, and functional analysis of the relations between environment and behavior. ABA-based therapies teach skills through the use of behavioral observation and reinforcement or prompting to teach each step of targeted behavior. ABA-based therapies are based on reliable evidence and are not experimental.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 41:

**§103. Recipient Criteria**

A. In order to qualify for ABA-based therapy services, a Medicaid recipient must meet the following criteria. The recipient must:

1. be from birth up to 21 years of age;
2. exhibit the presence of excesses and/or deficits of behaviors that significantly interfere with home or community activities (examples include, but are not limited to aggression,

self-injury, elopement, impaired development in the areas of communication and/or social interaction, etc.);

3. be diagnosed by a qualified health care professional with a condition for which ABA-based therapy services are recognized as therapeutically appropriate, including autism spectrum disorder; and

4. have a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation that prescribes and/or recommends ABA services that is conducted by a qualified health care professional.

5. - 6. Repealed.

B. All of the criteria in §103.A must be met to receive services.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 41:

### **Chapter 3. Services**

#### **§301. Covered Services and Limitations**

A. Medicaid covered ABA-based therapy services must be:

1. medically necessary;

2. prior authorized by the Medicaid Program or its designee; and

3. delivered in accordance with the recipient's treatment plan.

B. Services must be provided directly or billed by

behavior analysts licensed by the Louisiana Behavior Analyst Board.

C. Medical necessity for ABA-based therapy services shall be determined according to the provisions of the *Louisiana Administrative Code* (LAC), Title 50, Part I, Chapter 11 (*Louisiana Register*, Volume 37, Number 1).

D. ABA-based therapy services may be prior authorized for a time period not to exceed 180 days. Services provided without prior authorization shall not be considered for reimbursement, except in the case of retroactive Medicaid eligibility.

E. Service Limitations

1. Services shall be based upon the individual needs of the child, and must give consideration to the child's age, school attendance requirements, and other daily activities as documented in the treatment plan.

2. Services must be delivered in a natural setting (e.g., home and community-based settings, including schools and clinics).

a. Services delivered in a school setting must not duplicate services rendered under an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or an individualized educational program (IEP) as required under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

3. Any services delivered by direct line staff must be under the supervision of a lead behavior therapist who is a

Louisiana licensed behavior analyst.

F. Not Medically Necessary/Non-Covered Services. The following services do not meet medical necessity criteria, nor qualify as Medicaid covered ABA-based therapy services:

1. therapy services rendered when measureable functional improvement or continued clinical benefit is not expected, and therapy is not necessary for maintenance of function or to prevent deterioration;

2. services that are primarily educational in nature;

3. services delivered outside of the school setting that are duplicative services under an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or an individualized educational program (IEP), as required under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);

4. treatment whose purpose is vocationally- or recreationally-based;

5. custodial care;

a. for purposes of these provisions, custodial care:

i. shall be defined as care that is provided primarily to assist in the activities of daily living (ADLs), such as bathing, dressing, eating, and maintaining personal hygiene and safety;

ii. is provided primarily for maintaining

the recipient's or anyone else's safety; and

iii. could be provided by persons without professional skills or training; and

6. services, supplies, or procedures performed in a non-conventional setting including, but not limited:

- a. resorts;
- b. spas;
- c. therapeutic programs; and
- d. camps.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 41:

**§303. Treatment Plan**

A. ABA-based therapy services shall be rendered in accordance with the individual's treatment plan. The treatment plan shall:

1. be person-centered and based upon individualized goals;

2. be developed by a licensed behavior analyst;

3. delineate both the frequency of baseline behaviors and the treatment development plan to address the behaviors;

4. identify long, intermediate, and short-term goals and objectives that are behaviorally defined;

5. identify the criteria that will be used to measure achievement of behavior objectives;
6. clearly identify the schedule of services planned and the individual providers responsible for delivering the services;
7. include care coordination involving the parents or caregiver(s), school, state disability programs, and others as applicable;
8. include parent/caregiver training, support, and participation;
9. have objectives that are specific, measureable, based upon clinical observations, include outcome measurement assessment, and tailored to the individual; and
10. ensure that interventions are consistent with ABA techniques.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 41:

## **Chapter 5. Provider Participation**

### **§501. General Provisions**

A. ABA-based therapy services must be provided by or under the supervision of a behavior analyst who is currently licensed by the Louisiana Behavior Analyst Board, or a licensed psychologist, or a licensed medical psychologist.

B. Licensed behavior analysts that render ABA-based therapy services shall meet the following provider qualifications:

1. be licensed by the Louisiana Behavior Analyst Board;
2. be covered by professional liability insurance to limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$1,000,000 aggregate;
3. have no sanctions or disciplinary actions on their Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA®) or Board Certified Behavior Analyst-Doctoral (BCBA-D) certification and/or state licensure;
4. not have Medicare/Medicaid sanctions, or be excluded from participation in federally funded programs (i.e., Office of Inspector General's list of excluded individuals/entities (OIG-LEIE), system for award management (SAM) listing and state Medicaid sanctions listings); and
5. have a completed criminal background check to include federal criminal, state criminal, parish criminal and sex offender reports for the state and parish in which the behavior analyst is currently working and residing.
  - a. Criminal background checks must be performed at the time of hire and at least five years thereafter.
  - b. Background checks must be current, within a year prior to the initial Medicaid enrollment application. Background checks must be performed at least every five years

thereafter.

C. Certified assistant behavior analyst that render ABA-based therapy services shall meet the following provider qualifications:

1. must be certified by the Louisiana Behavior Analyst Board;

2. must work under the supervision of a licensed behavior analyst;

a. the supervisory relationship must be documented in writing;

3. must have no sanctions or disciplinary actions, if state-certified or board-certified by the BACB®;

4. may not have Medicare or Medicaid sanctions, or be excluded from participation in federally funded programs (i.e., Office of Inspector General's list of excluded individuals/entities (OIG-LEIE), system for award management (SAM) listing and state Medicaid sanctions listings); and

5. have a completed criminal background check to include federal criminal, state criminal, parish criminal and sex offender reports for the state and parish in which the certified assistant behavior analyst is currently working and residing.

a. Evidence of this background check must be provided by the employer.

b. Criminal background checks must be performed

at the time of hire and an update performed at least every five years thereafter.

D. Registered line technicians that render ABA-based therapy services shall meet the following provider qualifications:

1. must be registered by the Louisiana Behavior Analyst Board;

2. must work under the supervision of a licensed behavior analyst;

a. the supervisory relationship must be documented in writing;

3. may not have Medicaid or Medicare sanctions or be excluded from participation in federally funded programs (OIG-LEIE listing, SAM listing and state Medicaid sanctions listings); and

4. have a completed criminal background check to include federal criminal, state criminal, parish criminal and sex offender reports for the state and parish in which the certified assistant behavior analyst is currently working and residing.

a. Evidence of this background check must be provided by the employer.

b. Criminal background checks must be performed at the time of hire and an update performed at least every five years thereafter.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 41:

**Chapter 7. Reimbursements**

**§701. General Provisions**

A. The Medicaid Program shall provide reimbursement for ABA-based therapy services to enrolled behavior analysts who are currently licensed and in good standing with the Louisiana Behavior Analyst Board. Reimbursement shall only be made for services billed by a licensed behavior analyst, licensed psychologist, or licensed medical psychologist.

B. Reimbursement for ABA services shall not be made to, or on behalf of services rendered by, a parent, a legal guardian or legally responsible person.

C. Reimbursement shall only be made for services authorized by the Medicaid Program or its designee.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 41:

**§703. Reimbursement Methodology**

A. Reimbursement for ABA-based therapy services shall be based upon a percentage of the commercial rates for ABA-based therapy services in the state of Louisiana. The rates are based

upon 15 minute units of service, with the exception of mental health services plan which shall be reimbursed at an hourly fee rate.

B. Repealed.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 41:

Interested persons may submit written comments to J. Ruth Kennedy, Bureau of Health Services Financing, P.O. Box 91030, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9030 or by email to MedicaidPolicy@la.gov. Ms. Kennedy is responsible for responding to inquiries regarding this Emergency Rule. A copy of this Emergency Rule is available for review by interested parties at parish Medicaid offices.

Kathy H. Kliebert

Secretary