On January 1, 2017, Maryland Medicaid implemented Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services for participants under 21 years of age who are residing in the community and who have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The program is managed by the Maryland Department of Health's (MDH) Administrative Services Organization (ASO), Beacon Health Options (Beacon). ABA therapy is proven to be the most effective treatment for individuals diagnosed with ASD. ABA therapy includes behavioral techniques to increase pro-social behaviors such as communication, play, and age-appropriate skills. As a result, behaviors that are harmful to self or others are reduced.

WHAT DO I NEED TO GET STARTED?

1. **ONE** of the following:

    a. Comprehensive diagnostic evaluation (CDE) completed by a Maryland Medicaid approved qualified health care professional (QHCP) dated within the past three years

    b. Diagnostic evaluation comprised of 1) diagnostic report completed by a non-qualified health care professional (i.e., school psychologist, speech language pathologist) accompanied by 2) Physician Confirmation of Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnosis form both dated with in the past three years

    c. A CDE completed more than three years ago accompanied by a current Clinical Review for Autism Spectrum Disorder and Applied Behavior Analysis form

What is a Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluation?	Who are the QHCPs that can complete a CDE?	
A CDE Requires the Following: • A parent/caregiver interview • Direct observation of the participant outlining behaviors consistent with ASD per the ***DSM V*** • A description of development and psychosocial history of the participant • Documentation of current functioning across major domains of development • A statement identifying presenting diagnosis ○ **Recommended:** Testing instruments and/or standardized assessment tool to arrive at a fully informed diagnosis	Developmental Pediatrician Neuropsychologist Pediatric Neurologist Pediatrician or Nurse Practitioner with training and experience to diagnose ASD	Child Psychiatrist Clinical Psychologist

2. A referral for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) must be written within the past six months by an above named qualified health care professional. Use the Accessing ABA Benefit: Parent/Caregiver Document Checklist to assist you in ensuring you have everything you need.

WHERE CAN I OBTAIN A REFERRAL FOR A QUALIFIED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL TO COMPLETE A CDE?

To be referred to an individual who can complete the CDE, call Beacon at 800-888-1965 from 8 a.m.–6 p.m. EST Monday-Friday.

I HAVE ONE OF THE ABOVE NAMED CDE REQUIREMENTS AND A REFERRAL FOR ABA. WHAT'S NEXT?

Contact Beacon at 800-888-1965 from 8 a.m.–6 p.m. EST Monday-Friday. Beacon will assist with ensuring that you have all of the documents you need. When all required information is received and reviewed, Beacon will provide you with a list of ABA provider(s) available in your area. Once you choose an ABA provider, you should work with the ABA provider directly to set-up the ABA assessment.

WHAT IS AN ABA ASSESSMENT?

The ABA assessment is the first step of the process to determine if ABA services are medically necessary. It is the process for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) or Psychologist to evaluate your child's skills and needs to develop an individualized treatment plan. This requires a series of meetings, interviews, and observations with the child and their caregivers.

WHAT ARE ABA SERVICES?

ABA services are a combination of services to include direct 1:1 therapy, supervision of direct 1:1 therapy, parent/caregiver training, and social skills (when appropriate). Caregiver involvement is critical to achieve best outcomes. ABA services most frequently take place in the participant's home but can also occur in a clinic and/or community setting.

MY CHILD IS RECEIVING ABA SERVICES, AND THEIR CDE EXPIRES. WHAT HAPPENS?

If your child's CDE expires while receiving ABA services, he can continue receiving ABA services for that authorization period. However, prior to authorizing continued ABA services, Maryland Medicaid requires a qualified health care professional to complete a [Clinical Review for Autism Spectrum Disorder and Applied Behavior Analysis](#) form. The form should be submitted to Beacon from the ABA provider with their request for continued ABA services. Failure to submit a completed clinical review form leaves the participant at risk for a denial in continued ABA services. Per Maryland Medicaid, a clinical review for autism spectrum disorder and Applied Behavior Analysis must be completed every three years to determine if the recipient continues to meet diagnostic criteria for ASD and to confirm that ABA services continue to be medically necessary.

I HAVE OTHER INSURANCE AS PRIMARY, MARYLAND MEDICAID AS SECONDARY. WHAT DO I DO WHEN I NEED AN ABA REFERRAL?

You will first need to contact your primary insurance carrier to access the ABA benefit. If your primary insurance has denied access to the ABA benefit or it is not offered, contact Beacon at 800-888-1965 from 8 a.m.–6 p.m. EST Monday-Friday. Beacon will instruct you to submit the denial letter from your primary insurance and then will walk you through the requirements as described above to access ABA provider referrals.

I HAVE OTHER INSURANCE AS PRIMARY, MARYLAND MEDICAID AS SECONDARY. WHAT DO I DO WHEN ACCESSING ABA SERVICES?

The ABA provider will bill your primary insurance first for ABA services and then bill Maryland Medicaid. As a Medicaid recipient, a provider cannot bill you for any copay/coinsurance or deductible related to ABA services provided.

For additional resources related to the ABA benefit, visit:
Maryland Department of Health: https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/epsdt/ABA/Pages/Home.aspx

Beacon Health Options Participant website: http://maryland.beaconhealthoptions.com/participants/participant_home.html