CalOptima Guidance for Behavioral Health Treatment (BHT) in response to COVID-19 pandemic

During this period of “stay at home” issued by the California Governor, some families may choose to cancel ABA sessions to limit the risk of contracting COVID-19. For families who wish to continue Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) service, ABA providers should review their clients’ needs and determine which clients may be able to pause services without experiencing detrimental effects.

CalOptima recommends ABA providers follow the ethics guidance published by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) which can be found here:


Telehealth Option

Many ABA providers have inquired about telehealth option during COVID-19. While CalOptima already reimburses Qualified Autism Services (QAS) providers and Board Certified Behavioral Analysts (BCBAs) for parent skill training and supervision via telehealth, we are making the following temporary revisions to telehealth requirements during the national health emergency to ensure ABA services can continue with minimal disruption.

- All ABA services can be delivered via telehealth, as clinically appropriate, taking into consideration the members functioning level and attending skills
- Paraprofessionals and Behavioral Management Assistant (BMA) can provide ABA services via telehealth
- ABA services provided via telehealth must be consistent with the current treatment plan
- Providers must maintain necessary records and documentation for all ABA services
- ABA providers must document in writing any barriers to service provision and steps taken for each client

The above changes are effective March 23, 2020 until further notice.