Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) interventions are the standard of care for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Typically delivered in-person, ABA interventions can increase adaptive skills and decrease maladaptive behaviors in individuals with ASD, including behaviors that may be dangerous to themselves and others. The COVID-19 pandemic and measures imposed to curtail its spread have created unprecedented challenges to continuity of care for patients with ASD. In addition to compounding caregiver stress, disruptions in services may cause clinical regression -- placing patients at increased risk for emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

In response to the current crisis, CMS, the Office of Civil Rights and the Office of the Inspector General have all taken measures to facilitate access to telehealth services.\(^1\) Many federal, state, and local healthcare funders have quickly acted to expand coverage for medically necessary services delivered via telehealth, including ABA.\(^2\) Telehealth has been employed for almost two decades in the delivery of ABA assessment and treatment to individuals with ASD and training of caregivers in the assessment and delivery of ABA services. (Ferguson, 2019) Telehealth service delivery models can help ensure continued access to medically necessary treatment during the COVID-19 crisis.

**CASP Telehealth Task Force**

Composed of the nation’s leading experts in ABA and telehealth, the CASP Telehealth Task Force has released “Practice Parameters for Telehealth-implementation of Applied Behavior Analysis: Continuity of Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic” (PPT). This document provides best practice guidelines, training and technical support to assist ABA providers in developing critical response plans to maintain continuity of care for patients with ASD. It can also be used by healthcare funders and payers to develop coverage guidelines that ensure that their members maintain critical access to safe and effective ABA during this crisis.

**On behalf of CASP, its member organizations and the individuals with autism they serve, we urge funders to adopt the recommendations detailed on p.43 of the Telehealth Practice Parameters during this national emergency:**

1. Reimburse for ABA delivered via telehealth modalities for all Adaptive Behavior Treatment (i.e., ABA) procedural codes;
2. Remove prior authorization requirements to expedite access to ABA services delivered via telehealth;
3. Acknowledge the necessity for increased frequency of treatment monitoring when transitioning from in-person to telehealth services and authorize relevant CPT codes accordingly;
4. Incorporate asynchronous methods to offer caregivers expanded options to access care via telehealth.

For additional information, please contact Mike Wasmer, Vice President of Government Affairs & Special Projects at mwasmer@casproviders.org.

**Resources**

- The Council of Autism Service Providers.  [www.casproviders.org](http://www.casproviders.org)
- [CASP Organizational Guidelines and Standards: Telehealth Chapter](https://casproviders.org/coronavirus-resources/telehealth/) (CASP, 2020)
- [Practice Parameters for Telehealth-implementation of Applied Behavior Analysis: Continuity of Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://casproviders.org/coronavirus-resources/telehealth/) (CASP, 2020)

The Council of Autism Service Providers (CASP) is a non-profit association of autism service providers who have demonstrated commitment to providing evidence-based practice (EBP) to individuals with ASD. EBP in ABA service delivery entails the integration of clinical expertise, the best research evidence for delivery behavioral intervention, and well-articulated ethical standards. Oversight of the “Applied Behavior Analysis Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder: Practice Guidelines for Healthcare Funders and Manager (2nd ed.) was recently transferred from the Behavior Analyst Certification Board to CASP for ongoing updates and revisions.

\(^1\) https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/emergency-preparedness/notification-enforcement-discretion-telehealth/index.html

\(^2\) [https://casproviders.org/coronavirus-resources/telehealth/](https://casproviders.org/coronavirus-resources/telehealth/)