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PROVIDER ALERT

Introducing Updated Initial & Ongoing Requirements for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Services

February 17, 2021

Optum Maryland wishes to alert **ABA providers** and **referring facilities** of updated requirements for both initial requests for ABA services and for those receiving ongoing ABA services. The updated initial and ongoing requirements to access ABA will go into effect on **February 24, 2021.**

ABA services continue to be available to Maryland Medicaid recipients who are under the age of 21, reside in a home/community setting, have a confirmed diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and have been referred for ABA services by a qualified health care professional. ABA services will continue to be reviewed based on medical necessity for the services being requested.

Maryland Department of Health (MDH) would like to first ensure all providers are aware of the following definitions:

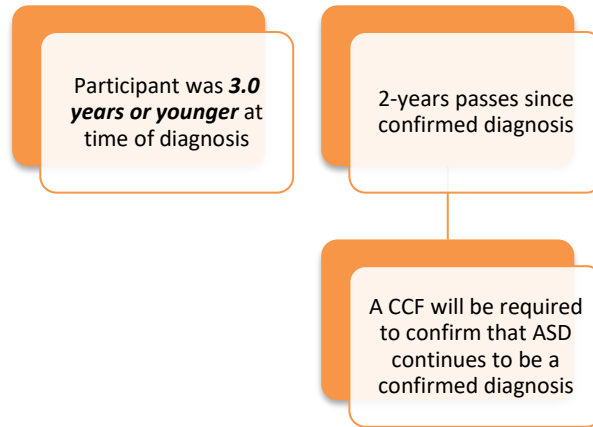| Important Definitions		
CDE	**QHCP**	**CCF**
Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluation	**Qualified Health Care Professional**	**Clinical Confirmation Form**
Following components are **required** ✓ Parent/caregiver interview ✓ Description of participant's development and psychosocial history ✓ Direct observation of participant outlining behaviors consistent with DSM-V criteria for the diagnosis of ASD (mental status exam) ✓ Description of current functioning across major domains of development ✓ Statement identifying presenting diagnosis (F84.0, F84.5, F84.8, & F84.9) Recommended (not required): Standardized diagnostic measures (i.e., ADOS-II, CARS-2, GARS, etc.)	The following providers with training and experience to diagnose ASD: ✓ Developmental pediatricians ✓ Pediatricians ✓ Pediatric Neurologists ✓ Child Psychiatrists ✓ Clinical Psychologists ✓ Neuropsychologists ✓ Nurse Practitioners	A form to be completed by a QHCP to confirm a participant continues to meet the criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder. **Note:** *The need for the form is dependent on age of participant at time of ASD diagnosis and amount of time since that diagnosis was given.*

MDH is making the following changes to the initial and ongoing requirements for ABA services:

1. Participant's age at time of diagnosis will now determine if/when a Clinical Confirmation Form (CCF) is required

- If participant was **3 years and 1 month or older** at time of diagnosis by a Qualified Health Care Professional (QHCP)
  - Diagnosis of ASD is confirmed via the completed Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluation (CDE) submitted, *no further documentation required initially or on an ongoing basis*

- If participant was **3 years and 0 months or younger** at time of diagnosis by a QHCP
  - Diagnosis of ASD is confirmed via the complete CDE and is valid for 2 years
  - If it has been more than 2 years since confirmed diagnosis by a QHCP; a CCF is required

2. **Evaluations completed by non-qualified health care professionals** (i.e., School Psychologists and/or Speech Pathologists) will **no longer be accepted**
   - The form previously titled "Physician Confirmation of ASD" is retired and no longer valid
   - See COMAR 10.09.28.01 and .03 for definitions and participant eligibility requirements

INITIAL Requirements to Access an ABA Assessment

CDE is required to be completed by a QHCP	Referral / prescription for ABA services by a QHCP dated within the last 6 months	Clinical Confirmation Form (CCF) required **ONLY IF** participant was 3.0 years or younger at time of ASD diagnosis and it has been 2+ years since date of diagnosis

Requirements to CONTINUE to Access ABA Treatment

- Once a participant is engaged in ABA treatment, only in the following circumstance would a CCF be required for a participant to *CONTINUE* to access ABA treatment

Participant was **3.0 years or younger** at time of diagnosis

2-years passes since confirmed diagnosis

A CCF will be required to confirm that ASD continues to be a confirmed diagnosis

In an effort to further outline what these requirements look like in action, please reference the following fictional scenarios to assist in explaining the updated requirements.

Scenario 1: CCF Required prior to starting ABA services	Scenario 2: No CCF Required prior to starting ABA services	Scenario 3: No CCF required prior to starting ABA services, but is required after ABA treatment has started
Ruby's parent has sent in documentation for her to access the ABA benefit. The CDE meets requirements and **per the report, Ruby was 2 years 9 months at age of diagnosis**. Currently, **Ruby is 11 years old**. Given that <u>**Ruby was diagnosed before the age of 3 and it has been more than 2 years since the age of diagnosis, a clinical confirmation form will be required initially to accompany the CDE**</u> Ruby's family shared. The clinical confirmation form requires that a QHCP that has seen Ruby within the last 6 months provide a confirmation of her diagnosis of ASD. Once the diagnosis is confirmed, no clinical confirmation form would be required of Ruby's family on an ongoing basis.	Barrett's primary care doctor has sent over an evaluation for review as Barrett was recently diagnosed with ASD. The CDE meets requirements and **per the report, Barrett was 4 years 4 months at age of diagnosis**. Currently, **Barrett is 8 years old**. Given that <u>**Barrett was diagnosed after the age of 3.1, no clinical confirmation form will be required either initially or ongoing**</u>. The diagnosis is considered confirmed.	Scenario 3: Harvey's social worker sends over an evaluation for Harvey to access the ABA benefit. The CDE meets requirements and **per the report, Harvey was 1 year 10 months at age of diagnosis**. Currently, **Harvey is 2 years old**. While Harvey was diagnosed before age 3, it has not yet been 2 years since that diagnoses was given. Therefore, no additional information would be required initially. However, **once Harvey starts ABA services, a clinical confirmation form will be requested** 9 months out from the date the diagnosis will "expire". **The date the diagnosis will expire is when Harvey is 3 years 10 months old.**

Please reference the attached [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ) for further information.

If, after review of all this information, you have further questions please email:

ombhaba@optum.com

Thank you,

Optum Maryland Team