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Subject: FW: NEWS: Florida Association for Behavior Analysis Commends State for Listening to Feedback from Providers, Parents of Children with Autism

From: Shelby Boyd [<mailto:shelby@sachsmedia.com>]

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Florida Association for Behavior Analysis Commends State for Listening to Feedback from Providers, Parents of Children with Autism

AHCA announces revised policies for Medicaid-covered behavior analysis services

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Association for Behavior Analysis (FABA) today commended the state Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) for clarifying the implementation of Medicaid-covered behavior analysis services after hearing feedback from Association leaders, numerous behavior analysis providers, and the parents of children who benefit from these important services.

The Agency announced today that it would not make any changes or cuts to behavior analysis reimbursement rates in 2019 and would delay full implementation of some policies, instead using pilot programs to better study the potential effectiveness of certain programs. This change will ease the concerns of FABA leaders and numerous other behavior analysis professionals, who provide a medically necessary service that primarily helps children and adults who have autism, Down syndrome, and other developmental disabilities or behavioral challenges.

“It’s clear that state officials are listening to the heartfelt concerns and vocal comments that have come from parents and providers across the state,” said Andrew Houvouras, BCBA President of the Florida Association for Behavior Analysis. “This is an important step in the right direction and we are confident that these new changes will provide more opportunity and time for providers and state officials to collaborate and work toward our shared goal of ensuring that every individual in Florida who needs services is able to work with a qualified behavior analyst.”

Other changes announced today by the Agency include:

- Delaying the requirement that provider groups show proof of health care clinic licensure
- Delaying statewide implementation of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) model for authorizing behavior analysis services and instead launching it as a pilot program
- Delaying statewide implementation of electronic visit verification (EVV) for behavioral analysis services and instead launching it as a pilot program

Additionally, AHCA announced it is changing the format of the remaining three public meetings that had been scheduled to be held in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and Pensacola over the coming weeks. These meetings will now be hosted in a webinar format.

FABA and its more than 1,500 members across the state have had strong presences at each of the meetings in Tallahassee, Tampa, Orlando, and today in Jacksonville in order to hear about the proposed changes and provide important feedback. Hundreds of parents, providers, and educators attended each of these meetings and rallied to support a more thoughtful approach to changes that could affect so many Floridians.

The changes initially proposed by the Agency would have reduced reimbursement rates paid for behavior analysis services by as much as 54%, with some of the most expert services suffering 22% cuts. These cuts would have directly impacted the availability of these important services to children and adults throughout the state.

To learn more about the Florida Association for Behavior Analysis, visit FABAWorld.org.

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