



California Association for Behavior Analysis

A 501(c)6 nonprofit professional association
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Position Statement: Generally Accepted Standards of Care Adopted May 3rd, 2024

The California Mental Health Parity Act as amended ([Senate Bill 855](#)) requires health plans to cover medically necessary services for mental health and substance use disorders under the same terms and conditions as other medical conditions. The Act specifies that in determining medical necessity for mental health and substance use disorders, health plans must rely on current generally accepted standards of care. It defines those as "...standards of care and clinical practice that are generally recognized by health care providers practicing in relevant clinical specialties... Valid, evidence-based sources establishing generally accepted standards of mental health and substance use disorder care include peer-reviewed scientific studies and medical literature, clinical practice guidelines and recommendations of **nonprofit health care provider professional associations**, specialty societies and federal government agencies, and drug labeling approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration" (emphasis added).

As the nonprofit professional association for the behavioral health clinical specialty of applied behavior analysis (ABA) in California, CalABA has a responsibility to inform health plans, providers, consumers, and policymakers about current generally accepted standards of care in the delivery of ABA services to individuals diagnosed with mental health conditions (including but not limited to autism spectrum disorder) and substance use disorders. To that end, CalABA endorses the following sections of the [ABA Coding Coalition Model Coverage Policy for Adaptive Behavior Services: Guidelines for Working with CPT Codes and Developing Payer Policies](#) as representing the current generally accepted standards of ABA health care for any individual for whom those services are medically necessary:

- Indications
- General coverage requirements
- Service authorizations
- Approved providers
- Treatment models
- ABA procedures
- Treatment settings
- Patient age
- Treatment dosage
- Components of a treatment plan
- Dosage of case supervision
- Caseload size
- Caregivers as important contributors to outcomes
- Coordination with other professionals
- Discharge, transition planning, and continuity of care
- Telehealth service delivery
- Bibliography

Additionally, CalABA endorses the Council of Autism Service Providers [Applied Behavior Analysis Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder: Guidance for Healthcare Funders, Regulatory Bodies, Service Providers, and Consumers \(3rd Edition\)](#) as the generally accepted standards of ABA health care services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

Finally, CalABA endorses the [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#) and [RBT Ethics Code](#) as current ethical standards for ABA practitioners who are credentialed by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB).