

COVID-19: expansion of telemedicine to provide Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy by a BCBA during COVID-19 outbreak

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Arkansas, DMS has suspended the prohibition on use of telemedicine technology for limited Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy services provided to established patients during the COVID-19 outbreak and the declaration of public health emergency. In compliance with this action, Summit Community Care has expanded the allowable telemedicine services to include services provided by licensed BCBA® or BCBA-D®.

The telemedicine services described below for ABA are retroactive to dates of service, March 27, 2020. The services will be available to established patients only, as described for dates of service 30 days from today, with the possibility of extending for additional 30-day periods.

97155 EP

Adaptive behavior treatment provided by a BCBA or BCBA-D. Individual adaptive behavior treatment by BCBA, face-to-face with the patient and may also include caregivers. This includes implementation and modification of treatment the plan. This may also include simultaneous direction of technician. **Prior authorization is required.**

97156 EP

Family adaptive behavior treatment, provided by a BCBA, face-to-face with parents and/or caregivers. Family sessions should address education of the parents or caregivers on the patient's plan of care, specific objectives, treatment approaches, etc. as they relate to the individual client's ASD symptoms and how to address them in the patient's natural environment. **Prior authorization is required.**

To bill for this service, the BCBA must document that the parent or caregiver was present with a beneficiary. The service may be provided at the same rate as the regular *face-to-face* rate. BCBA is a licensed clinician that may perform telemedicine under the scope of their license.

To allow for continued therapy services for established patients during this time of social distancing, DMS is lifting the requirement that the beneficiary be located at a health care facility (originating site) to receive telemedicine services for the following services only:

- Adaptive behavior treatment provided by a BCBA or BCBA-D
- Family adaptive behavior treatment guidance, by a BCBA or BCBA-D

Parental or caregiver involvement is required during the session. The sessions are limited to 30 minutes each, with a maximum of three sessions per week.

The following services cannot be completed via telemedicine:

1. ABA evaluations and re-evaluations. However, if an annual ABA evaluation is due during this time, the deadline may be extended until the patient is able to come into the office.
2. Group services.

Billing instructions

When billing for these services you must include all modifiers on the claim. **All therapy claims submitted for telemedicine must include the GT modifier and (02) as the place of service.**

If you have any questions about this communication, please contact your local Provider Relations representative.