



Independent Analysis of the Comprehensive Autism Care Demonstration Program: Meeting 2

Provider Perspective

11 Jan 24

**Michelle A. Linn, M.S.
President, Alpine Autism Center**

- **Military spouse, raised 2 boys with profound autism**
- **Veteran, Engineer, retired Air Force civil servant (33 yrs)**
- **Founding board member, current President, Alpine Autism Center, Section 501 (c)(3) Non-profit**
- **Member of 2006 “Parent Panel” resulting in NDAA 2007 SEC 717**
- **Consumer Reviewer, Autism Research Program, DoD Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program, since 2014 (served eight times)**



- **Serve clients age 3 through adulthood (current capacity 50 clients)**
- **Maintain Colorado Daycare and Day-treatment licenses**
- **Comply with Practice Guidelines (Council of Autism Service Providers, ABA Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder)**
- **Provide Comprehensive ABA services and Home and Community Based Services (Medicaid Waiver)**
- **Four Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), all line staff are Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs)**
- **Accept all private, state, federal insurance (Anthem, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Cigna, United Healthcare, Aetna)**
- **Colorado Medicaid**
- **TRICARE and CHAMPVA**

- 2005 Alpine Autism Center opens October, ABA based day program
- 2007 First TRICARE clients (only BCBA billable, ECHO)
- 2008 First provider in region under Autism Services Demonstration
- 2010 Colorado Insurance Mandate for Applied Behavior Analysis
- 2011 New Facility, First adult clients
- 2013 Operations threatened during TriWest/United Healthcare transition
- 2014 Autism Care Demonstration Begins (all ABA under one uniform program)
- 2015 Colorado moves ABA from waiver to medical service under Medicaid (per 7 July 2014 CMS Info Bulletin)
- 2020 Operations threatened during TRICARE/Healthnet Audit
- 2021 Deferred any new TRICARE clients due to issues with authorization and March 2021 Autism Care Demonstration Comprehensive Revisions
- 2023 Began serving new TRICARE clients again

- **Autism diagnosis must be re-certified by a diagnosing provider every two years (DSM-5 Diagnostic Checklist); children over 8 must be diagnosed by specialist**
- **Outcome measures:**
 - **Pervasive Developmental Disorder Behavior Inventory (PDDBI) completed by parents and providers every 6 months**
 - **Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS-2) completed initially/annually**
 - **Vineland – 3 completed initially/annually**
 - **Parenting Stress Index (PSI-4) or Stress Index for Parents of Adolescents (SIPA) completed every 6 months**
- **Exclusion of ABA services in school settings by Behavior Technicians**
- **Restrictions on services in community settings and activities of daily living**
- **Exclusion of services for educational or vocational goals**
- **Minimum of six parent/caregiver training sessions each 6 months**

Authorization Requirements Comparison

	TRICARE				Medicaid			Anthem BC/BS			United Healthcare			Cigna		
	Initial	Annual	6 mos	2 Years	Initial	Annual	6 mos	Initial	Annual	6 mos	Initial	Annual	6 mos	Initial	Annual	6 mos
Assessment/Treatment Plan	X		X		X		X	X		X	X		X	X		X
New referral /ABA Md Order	X			X	X			X*			X*			X*		
Autism Diagnosis Verification	X			X	X			X			X			X		
DSM-V Diagnostic Checklist				X												
Parent PDDBI (under age 18)	X		X													
Teacher PDDBI (under age 18)			X													
Vineland - 3	X	X								X*		X*			X**	
SRS-2	X	X										X*				
PSI-4-SF or SIPA (under age 18)	X		X													
RBT Registration	X															
Parent Training	X		6 times													

*Depending on Plan

** Any appropriate standardized assessment

TRICARE ACD also excludes CPT codes 97152, 97154, 0362T/0363T
Does not allow concurrent billing of CPT Codes 97155/97153

- **TRICARE Autism Care Demonstration benefits are by far the most difficult and administratively burdensome to deliver (of all carriers, including Medicaid)**
- **March 2021 changes to the ACD have been detrimental to families and providers – access to care/military readiness has been **NEGATIVELY** impacted**
- **Progress of clients is inherent in ABA service delivery; objective attainment dwarfs all other available services (speech, PT/OT, special education)**
- **For profound autism, consideration needs to be made for maintaining functioning level and prevention of regression (more research needed)**
- **An autism diagnosis within a family is usually traumatic, exhausting, emotionally and financially devastating (Military Readiness Impacted)**
- **It would be refreshing to see DHA actually trying to help families, improve military readiness and quality of life**

- <https://1drv.ms/v/s!Age9zkLDnu9ZmRt2Wt6h0-rTqSXE>

ABA is Effective!