

10 February 2025

Honorable Representative Rob Nosse  
Chair, House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care  
900 Court Street NE, Room 453  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Nosse,

On behalf of BlueSprig Pediatrics, I am writing to express our strong support for HB 2023, which proposes to establish health insurance coverage for applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy for individuals with intellectual and developmental disability diagnoses, ensuring parity with coverage for autism spectrum disorder diagnoses. This legislation is crucial for expanding access to essential ABA services for a broader population in need.

BlueSprig Pediatrics provides ABA services for individuals with autism (as well as other developmental disabilities) and their families in the Portland metro area. We currently service approximately 50 individuals and their families in Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas Counties. We employ 8 Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and approximately 45 Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) in the State of Oregon.

ABA therapy is tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual, and it involves a variety of techniques and interventions designed to improve a wide range of skills and behaviors. ABA is effective in teaching communication skills and in reducing challenging behaviors that can interfere with daily functioning. ABA is individualized and data-driven. It provides a comprehensive and effective approach to supporting individuals not only with autism diagnoses. The systematic and data-driven approach of ABA allows for the identification of specific learning needs and the development of tailored intervention strategies. This personalized approach helps improve cognitive abilities, social interactions, and adaptive behaviors, leading to more positive outcomes in various aspects of life.

I have personally worked in the field of ABA for approximately 20 years and have seen firsthand how access to ABA helps to improve quality of life for individuals and their families. In one instance, a 17-year-old girl with a chromosomal deletion disorder learned how to express her needs rather than engaging in severe self-injury. At the beginning of treatment, she had contusions on her face that were continuously being reinjured due to the level and frequency of self-injury that occurred. Her parents learned ways to respond to her interfering self-injurious behavior through Family Guidance sessions (part of ABA treatment). When ABA services began, the parents tended to try to sit on/restrain their daughter to prevent her from hitting herself in the face with her fists. This was unsafe for their child as well as for them. By the end of treatment, self-injury had decreased markedly in both rates and magnitude/severity; when self-injury did occur (rarely), the parents were empowered with responses that were safe for them and for their daughter. The patient's face no longer had contusions; and she learned different adaptive modes of communication (e.g., manual signs, vocalizations, picture exchange) to better meet her needs and wants in the absence of self-injury.

HB 2023 is a necessary step toward equitable access to evidence-based therapies for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We respectfully urge the committee to vote in favor of HB 2023.

Thank you for your time and service to the state of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diana Powell, MS, BCBA, LBA". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Diana Powell, M.S., BCBA, LBA  
BlueSprig Pediatrics  
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