

2/10/2025

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 **NEW SUMMIT Behavioral Therapy**, I am writing to express our strong support for HB 2023. This legislation 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.

New Summit has two locations in Oregon, serving the Eugene/Springfield area, and a location in Bend, serving the central Oregon region. New Summit specializes in early intervention and thus usually only takes clients between 18 months and 7 years of age who have an autism medical diagnosis, as required by insurance.

Clients older than 7 years old or with high severity/intensity self-injurious or aggressive behaviors may be referred to other providers in the region.

We currently have fourteen Board Certified Behavior Analysts, and employee Registered Behavior Technicians, Behavior Technicians, and students seeking BCBA certification.

The Association for Behavioral Analysis Internation (ABAI) and states such as Arizona, Indiana, and Virginia all recognize the importance of ABA for diagnosis in addition to Autism. ABAI has specialty groups for the following diagnoses or medical conditions:

- Addiction
- Autism
- Behavior Analysis in Military and Veterans' Issues
- Behavioral Development
- Behavioral Gerontology
- Behavioral Medicine
- Gambling
- Neuroscience
- Pediatric Feeding Disorders
- Positive Behavior Support
- Public School Behavior Analyst

- Rehabilitation and Independent Living
- Sexual Behavior: Research and Practice
- Verbal Behavior

While the scope of practice in Arizona is not as broad, they also have specialty groups for Addiction, ABA in schools, ABA for Adults, and ABA for feeding disorders. Virginia Association for Behavior Analysis have been looking into other ways to utilize ABA in their state. Dr. Steve Higgins has been working with Virginia ABA on the uses of behavior analysis with individuals with substance abuse disorders.

As a previous practitioner in Virginia, I was able to work with adult clients with traumatic brain injuries, schizophrenia, or other disorders. These clients were at risk of losing their housing due to their high rates of dangerous behavior. Bringing a behavioral analyst onto their teams helped everyone get on the same page regarding treatment and helped group home staff understand the functions of behavior. Once group home staff were able to identify the functions of these clients' behaviors correctly and learned to implement replacement behaviors, instances of clients' target behaviors were decreased, and their housing was no longer at risk.

Additionally, when working with these clients, our goal was to increase their independence in their activities of daily living. The more independent a client can be regarding dressing, bathing, and toileting, the less likely they are to experience abuse by a caregiver. These types of behavioral skill deficits or excess are not just part of autism but can be observed across several diagnoses, including but not limited to Down Syndrome, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, developmental delays, and receptive or expressive language disorders.

Due to the restrictions imposed by current Oregon statutes, the BCBA's at New Summit Behavioral Therapy are not able to provide care for these types of situations even when they are brought to our attention by other providers, early intervention, school districts, or DHS.

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,

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New Summit Behavioral Therapy

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