

**Testimony**  
**House Bill 1530 – Relating to covered services for medical assistance**  
**Senate Human Services Committee**  
**Senator Judy Lee, Chairwoman**  
March 14, 2023

Chairwoman Lee and Senate Human Services Committee,

I am Cristine Deaver, and I practice as a special education program coordinator and a licensed and board certified behavior analyst in the public school system. I am currently the President of North Dakota Association for Behavior Analysis. I'm in favor of HB 1530 amended back to its original form, to include:

“Applied behavior analysis to provide coverage to both assess and treat common behavioral problems across the lifespan of individuals with a variety of psychological and medical diagnoses.”

This bill will provide reimbursement for the Medicaid required parent/caregiver training. Currently, ND Medicaid requires caregiver training but does not provide reimbursement for this service. For businesses that provide ABA services, the lack of reimbursement is creating a financial hardship that may impact their ability to continue to provide services to children and families.

I am also in support of providing support of behavior analytic services past the age of 21 and to provide Medicaid coverage of behavioral assessment and intervention to individuals with a variety of psychological and medical diagnoses. While North Dakota Medicaid currently reimburses applied behavior analysis as a service for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, I would like to kindly provide additional information on the use of applied behavior analysis to both assess and treat common behavioral problems across the lifespan for individuals with a variety of psychological and medical diagnoses.

Peer-reviewed research and case studies have demonstrated that the implementation of behavior analytic treatments have effectively treated symptoms related to a variety of developmental, dental, medical, psychological, and cognitive disorders for pediatric, adult, and geriatric populations. Limiting reimbursement to children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder may prevent necessary and effective treatment that address symptoms related to specific disorders from being used with other populations (individuals with other diagnoses).

Applied Behavior Analysis as a treatment has been supported by several organizations that represent individuals across the lifespan for a variety of disorders including *Association of Behavior Analysis International, Association of Professional Behavior Analysis, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychological Association, National Education Association, and Center for Disease Control.*

I believe that if age and diagnostic restrictions are removed, more North Dakotans would have access to peer-reviewed and evidence-based practices to learn new skills and enrich the lives of those who

receive the service or are currently on waiting lists for services provided by other professionals. Recognizing that behavior analysts can provide effective services may reduce the number of individuals who are experiencing behavior health problems. Other professionals, such as psychologist, clinical counselors, etc., currently have waitlists that are detrimentally impacting individuals and families from receiving behavioral services in a timely manner. Allowing behavior analysts to practice within their scope of practice and area of competence allows for additional professionals to provide services to well established group of individuals.

I politely request that the State acknowledges the scope of behavior analysis as acknowledged by leading national professional organizations and move toward including ABA services across the lifespan and across a variety of populations.

Sincerely,

Cristine Deaver