

Changes to IBHS-ABA Medical Necessity Criteria, Authorization, and Service Delivery

Change in Medical Necessity Criteria

CBH has updated its [Medical Necessity Criteria \(MNC\)](#) for Intensive Behavioral Health Services – Applied Behavior Analysis (IBHS-ABA), adding additional criteria for admission to ABA – Early Childhood Intensive Treatment (ABA-ECIT) and for ABA One-to-One services (ABA 1:1) delivered in a center. These criteria have been approved by [OMHSAS](#) and will be used for all relevant medical necessity determinations effective 30 days from the release of this Bulletin. Please see the CBH website link above for the full text of the new MNC.

Change in Authorization Practice

IBHS is designed to be a cross-setting service, delivered in least restrictive and natural environments. For ABA-comprehensive treatment, individual treatment plan (ITP) goals and interventions should be implemented across the major domains of a child's life. Effective with service requests reviewed on September 1, 2025, CBH will not authorize IBHS services unless the ITP includes at least two parent/caregiver training goals and minimal monthly parent/caregiver training sessions. Best practice would be far more frequent, ideally weekly. Requests for continued stay must reflect progress and updates on these and all ITP goals.

In addition, CBH will perform medical necessity review on all youth who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with an interest in supporting transfer of skills to specialized educational staff. CBH will also perform medical necessity review on all youth receiving ABA over the age of 12 to ensure response to treatment and appropriate transition planning. These additional medical necessity reviews will begin with service requests reviewed on September 1, 2025.

Change in Business Rules for Behavior Health Technician–Applied Behavior Analysis (BHT-ABA)

Effective September 1, 2025, CBH will be adding UD pricing modifier to the BHT-ABA contracts. Providers will be expected to use this modifier to denote BHT service delivery when occurring at an ABA 1:1 site-based service location.

Effective October 1, 2025, CBH will be changing billing rules for BHT-ABA to align with the Medical Assistance fee schedule. The maximum number of units that can be delivered per day will be 32 (e.g., 8 hours).

For any questions about this Bulletin, please contact IBHS Psychologist Coordinator for Neurodevelopmental Services Dr. Jessica Woods at jessica.woods@phila.gov.