



# TRICARE® Autism Care Demonstration – Getting Care in the West Region

## *Coverage for beneficiaries diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder*

TRICARE covers medically necessary and appropriate services, including applied behavior analysis (ABA) services for beneficiaries diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Services covered under TRICARE include occupational therapy, physical therapy, health care provider services, psychological services, psychological outcome measures, prescription drugs, and speech therapy.

Applied behavior analysis is one of several covered benefits that uses a set of techniques based on behavior analytic principles, such as positive reinforcement. Applied behavior analysis can help develop speech and improve self-help and social interaction skills. It can also help to decrease certain behaviors, such as aggression or self-injury. Separate from the TRICARE medical benefit, ABA is covered under the TRICARE Comprehensive Autism Care Demonstration (ACD). Learn more about the ABA benefit at [www.tricare.mil/ACD](http://www.tricare.mil/ACD).

## Autism Care Demonstration Eligibility

Applied behavior analysis services are covered under the ACD for all qualifying dependents of active duty service members (ADSMs), retirees, and certain National Guard and Reserve members. Qualifying dependents must be enrolled in a TRICARE plan (TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Select, TRICARE Young Adult, TRICARE Retired Reserve, TRICARE Reserve Select); covered under the Transitional Assistance Management Program or TRICARE for Life; be a participant in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or Partnership for Peace; or if no longer TRICARE-eligible, participate in the Continued Health Care Benefit Program.

To qualify for covered ABA services under the ACD, your dependent, or child, must:

- Have been diagnosed with ASD by a TRICARE-authorized approved ASD-diagnosing provider.
- If the sponsor is an ADSM, be signed up for the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) and registered in the Extended Care Health Option (ECHO).

## Step 1: Get a Referral and Authorization

- This is required for everyone in all TRICARE plans, including TRICARE Select, and if you have other health insurance.
- The primary care manager (PCM) or ASD-diagnosing provider will submit a referral request to HNFS for approval.
  - Upon receiving a referral request, HNFS will issue an authorization for an initial assessment.
  - The authorization for ABA services will include the name of an authorized ABA provider who is accepting new patients. However, you are free to choose any network ABA provider who is accepting new patients. To request a provider other than the one listed on your prior authorization contact HNFS.
  - To check the status of the prior authorization for ABA services, use the self-service tools at [www.tricare-west.com](http://www.tricare-west.com).

## Step 2: Schedule an Appointment

When you get your initial authorization letter:

- Schedule your appointment with the provider listed in the authorization letter.
- The ABA provider will conduct an initial assessment and develop a treatment plan with recommendations for the number and frequency of sessions.

## Step 3: Receive ongoing services

Your ABA authorized provider will:

- Work one-on-one with your child.
- Supervise services provided by assistant behavior analysts and behavior technicians.
- Modify the treatment plan, as appropriate.
- Provide support and facilitate goals for parents and caregivers.



- Request approval for continuation of ABA services every six months, as applicable.
  - When requesting ongoing services, providers must submit to HNFS a treatment plan and an Individualized Education Plan if services are occurring in the school, and complete a new parent and teacher forms of the PDD-Behavior Inventory.
  - You’ll get a new authorization letter from HNFS for each approved six months of ABA services.
  - The PCM or ASD-diagnosing provider must submit a new referral to HNFS every two years.

#### Step 4: Schedule an Appointment for Outcome Measures

All beneficiaries must complete outcome measure requirements within one year of entry into the program and then again during each subsequent two year period. These set of outcome measures are done by an ASD-diagnosing provider and measure the patient’s symptom severity, adaptive behavior functioning every two years. The two required outcome measures every two years are the Vineland-3 and Social Responsiveness Scale-2 (SRS-2).

## Our Team

### ABA Dedicated Call Center

HNFS has dedicated ABA customer service representatives who can help you obtain support and information. The dedicated ABA line can be reached by calling our main TRICARE customer service number, 1-844-866-WEST (1-844-866-9378), and selecting the ABA benefit option. Our ABA customer service representatives can answer questions about the ACD, status of authorizations, outcome measure requirements, use of our online tools, and conduct provider services.

HNFS’ ACD team is also comprised of clinical and non-clinical staff available to support beneficiaries, their families and the ABA providers. Our ACD program is overseen by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst® (BCBA) with extensive experience supporting this specific population. In partnership with our medical directors, our team of BCBA’s review the treatment plans, provide support to the ABA providers and consult to ensure quality programs for beneficiaries.

Our autism service coordinators help ensure accurate and timely processing of authorizations. They are a dynamic team of specialists who support beneficiaries by reviewing and processing authorizations, communicating with ASD-diagnosing providers and military hospitals and clinics, and answering complex questions related to the ABA benefit.