

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT (BHT) COVERAGE FOR MEMBERS UNDER THE AGE OF 21

What is EPSDT?

In 1967, Congress expanded the Early Periodic Screening, Detection, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit for children. The EPSDT benefit provides comprehensive screening, diagnostic, treatment, and preventive health care services for individuals under the age of 21 who are enrolled in Medi-Cal. EPSDT services are intended to prevent or minimize developmental conditions and promote, to the maximum extent practicable, healthy development. Among the services included under the EPSDT benefit are physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, vision, dental, and hearing services, and Behavioral Health Therapy (BHT).

What is ABA/BHT?

BHT, better known as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and related treatments, is a time-intensive and labor-intensive behavioral intervention originally designed to treat the symptoms of autism in children. BHT teaches skills through the use of behavioral observation, prompting, and reinforcement. This treatment is typically conducted in children's homes for hours each day. Parent/guardian participation is required to ensure that the behavioral interventions are taught and maintained over time.

As of July 2018, a diagnosis of autism or autism spectrum disorder is no longer required for children 0-21 years old to qualify for BHT services. A formal recommendation or prescription for BHT from a licensed psychologist or physician is a requirement.

Do you have patients 0-21 years old who might benefit from an evaluation for BHT?

You or your office can initiate the referral process by:

- Calling **888-347-2264**; or
- Asking the patient, parent, or caregiver to contact us directly

Do you have patients in need of occupational, physical or speech therapy?

Based on the result of your EPSDT assessment (once found medically necessary), you can make your referral to the provider group/IPA.



Do you have patients who might benefit from vision, dental, hearing services?

Vision, dental and hearing services must be provided at intervals which meet reasonable standards of medical and dental practice and at other intervals indicated as medically necessary to determine the existence of a suspected illness or condition. These services must include, at a minimum, diagnosis and treatment for defects in vision, including eyeglasses, relief of pain and infections, restoration of teeth, maintenance of dental health and hearing aids.

Based on the result of your EPSDT assessment (once found medically necessary), you can make your referral to the provider group/IPA.

