

Information from Anthem for Care Providers that perform ABA Services during COVID-19

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Anthem is closely monitoring COVID-19 developments and what it means for our customers and our healthcare provider partners. Our clinical team is actively monitoring external queries and reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help us determine what action is necessary on our part.

To help address care providers' questions regarding Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) services, Anthem has developed the following frequently asked questions:

Please continue to visit the [Provider News](#) page regularly, as we will update the information as it becomes available. Thank you for the work you do for our members, especially during these difficult times.

Telehealth via (audio + video)

Anthem covers telehealth (i.e., video + audio) services for providers who have access to those platforms/capabilities today. Effective March 17, 2020, Anthem's affiliated health plans will waive member cost share for telehealth (video + audio) visits, including visits for mental health or substance abuse disorders, for our fully insured employer plans, Individual plans, Medicare plans and Medicaid plans where permissible for 90 days. Cost sharing will be waived for members using Anthem's telemedicine service, LiveHealth Online, as well as care received from other providers delivering virtual care through internet video + audio services. Self-insured plan sponsors may opt out of this program.

How is Anthem approaching the provision of ABA services via telehealth (audio + video)?

Anthem is making adjustments in our policy in the provision of ABA services to address the need for expanded telehealth access. We expect all ABA services will still be provided within benefits limits, authorization limits, and within state and federal regulatory requirements and licensure, including HIPAA compliance. These changes will be effective March 17th and will stay in place for 90 days. We will continue to actively monitor the rapidly evolving situation.

Is Anthem allowing the delivery of ABA therapy using telehealth methods?

Yes, we will allow authorized telehealth for supervision (97155), caregiver training (97156 & 97157) and functional behavior assessment (FBA) (97151) 97153 (adaptive behavioral treatment by protocol) with proper modifier.

Telehealth via telephone-only

Anthem does not cover these services today (with limited state exceptions) but we are providing this coverage for 90 days effective March 19, 2020, to reflect the concerns we have heard from providers about the need to support continuity of care for Plan members during extended periods of social distancing. Anthem will cover telephone-only medical and behavioral health services from in-network providers and out-of-network providers when required by state law. Anthem will waive associated cost shares for in-network providers only except where a broader waiver is required by law. Exceptions include chiropractic services, physical, occupational, and speech therapies. These services require face-to-face interaction and therefore are not appropriate for telephone-only consultations. Self-insured plan sponsors may opt out of this program. See explanation below regarding ABA services through telephone-only.

Is Anthem allowing delivery of ABA supervision, caregiver training and support, and FBA via telephone-only?

We strongly encourage authorized services to be provided via a telehealth (audio + video) platform. Telehealth platforms are widely available. However, if this is impossible due to the COVID-19, you may use telephone-only for these services for 90 days effective March 19, 2020. Please note that code 97153, adaptive behavioral treatment by protocol, is not appropriate for telephone-only interactions.

Are ABA providers allowed to use the hours approved in a current authorization for telehealth (audio + video) ABA services?

If an ABA provider is not requesting changes to existing authorized codes or units they can continue to use the authorization they have on file. No further action is required by the provider.

If an ABA provider is requesting changes to the authorization we have in place, such as changes to units or codes, they must submit a request for the change by submitting a new treatment request form outlining the changes they are requesting, please include current authorization reference number and date of change being requested.

If an ABA provider is requesting new authorization of code or units, they should follow the process already in place by submitting the request by fax or via Anthem's electronic portal.

Are the GT or 95 modifiers required for billing telehealth?

Yes, bill using the GT or 95 modifier.

What if I have additional questions pertaining to ABA?

Please call the Anthem ABA Unit at **(844) 269-0538**.

URL: <https://providernews.anthem.com/ohio/article/information-from-anthem-for-care-providers-that-perform-aba-services-during-covid-19-3>

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