

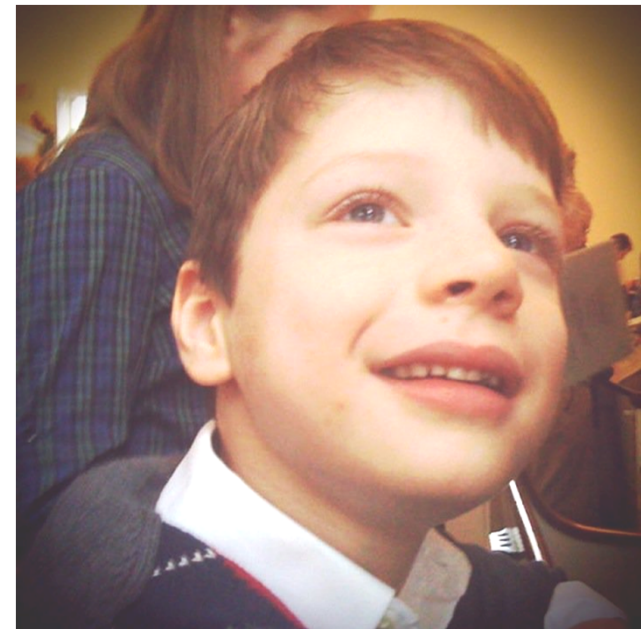


# Testimony in Support of S. 136 An Act Relating to Licensing and Regulating Applied Behavior Analysts and their Assistants

Judith Ursitti, CPA  
Director, State Government  
Affairs  
Autism Speaks

# Autism Spectrum Disorder

- American Academy of Pediatrics requires screening for all children at 18 and 24 month checkup
- According to the CDC, 1 in every 68 children is diagnosed with ASD
  - Impaired Communication
  - Impaired Social Interaction
  - Repetitive or Stereotyped Patterns of Behavior
  - Narrow Range of Interests
  - Four times more common in boys than girls



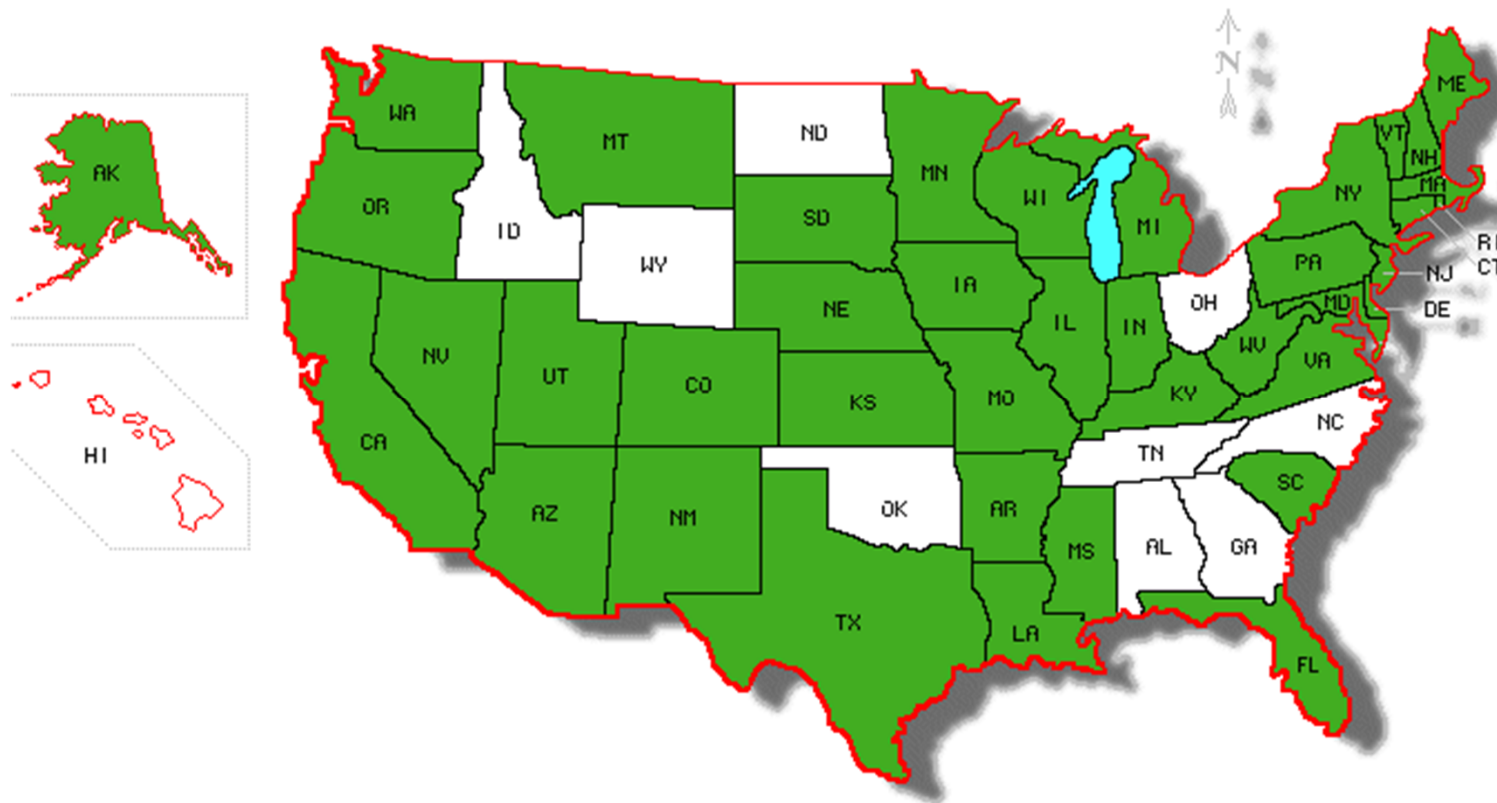
# ABA Therapy is Effective

“The effectiveness of ABA-based intervention in ASDs has been well documented through 5 decades of research . . . . Children who receive early intensive behavioral treatment have been shown to make substantial, sustained gains in IQ, language, academic performance, and adaptive behavior as well as some measures of social behavior, and their outcomes have been significantly better than those of children in control groups.”



*American Academy of Pediatrics*

# State Response



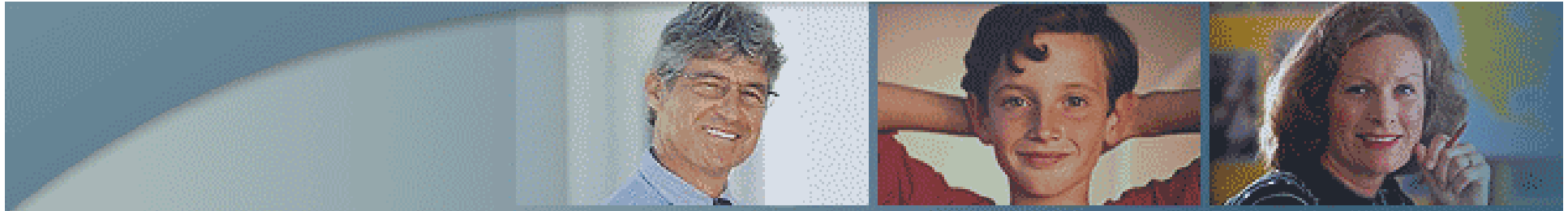
40 states now require coverage of autism treatment, including behavioral health treatments like applied behavior analysis. Georgia will become state 41 when Governor Deal signs their bill into law in the coming weeks

# ABA Provider Credentialing

- Massachusetts: Habilitative or rehabilitative care”, professional, counseling and guidance services and treatment programs, including, but not limited to, applied behavior analysis supervised by a board certified behavior analyst, that are necessary to develop, maintain and restore, to the maximum extent practicable, the functioning of an individual.
- Vermont: A health insurance plan shall provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders, including applied behavior analysis supervised by a nationally board-certified behavior analyst.
- New Hampshire: Professional services and treatment programs, including applied behavioral analysis, necessary to produce socially significant improvements in human behavior or to prevent loss of attained skill or function. To be eligible for coverage, applied behavior analysis must be provided by a person professionally certified by the national Behavior Analyst Certification Board or performed under the supervision of a person professionally certified by the national Behavior Analyst Certification Board.
- Maine: Habilitative or rehabilitative services, including applied behavior analysis or other professional or counseling services necessary to develop, maintain and restore the functioning of an individual to the extent possible. To be eligible for coverage, applied behavior analysis must be provided by a person professionally certified by a national board of behavior analysts or performed under the supervision of a person professionally certified by a national board of behavior analysts;

# Provider Credentials

[www.BACB.com](http://www.BACB.com)



The Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc.\* (BACB\*) is a nonprofit corporation established as a result of credentialing needs identified by behavior analysts, state governments, and consumers of behavior analysis services.

The BACB's mission is to develop, promote, and implement a voluntary international certification program for behavior analyst practitioners.

The BACB credentials Board Certified Behavior Analyst\* (BCBA\*) and Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst\* (BCaBA\*).



[Judith.ursitti@autismspeaks.org](mailto:Judith.ursitti@autismspeaks.org)

- The BACB was established in 1998 to develop a program for credentialing practitioners of ABA.
- Completion of specified coursework and supervised experiential training are also required to qualify to take the certification exams, which are psychometrically valid and reliable assessments of knowledge of the subject matter. Both BACB certification programs are accredited by the well-respected National Commission for Certifying Agencies of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence.
- The BACB credentials are recognized in numerous laws and regulations in dozens of states and accepted by many private and public health insurance plans. Specifically, Board Certified Behavior Analysts ® are recognized in many venues as qualified professionals who can practice independently, without supervision from members of other professions

# United Behavioral Healthcare BCBA/ABA Agency Credentialing Criteria

## Individual Board Certified Behavior Analysts – Solo Practitioner:

- BCBA or BCBA-D with active certification from the National Behavior Analyst Certification Board
- A minimum of six (6) months of supervised experience or training in the treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders

## ABA Agencies:

- BCBA or licensed clinician performs skills assessments and provides direct supervision of paraprofessionals in joint sessions with client and family
- Paraprofessionals receive appropriate training and supervision by BCBA's or licensed clinician
- BCBA or licensed clinician on staff providing program oversight



# Aetna Behavioral Health

Dear Health Care Professional:

Aetna Behavioral Health® is seeking health care professionals who are certified through the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) for the treatment of autism spectrum disorders (ASD). We are currently recruiting in the following states: AZ, CO, CT, FL, GA, IL, IN, KY, LA, MD, MT, NY, PA, SC, TN and TX. (In the future, we may recruit in additional states.)

By joining the Aetna Behavioral Health network to provide applied behavioral analysis (ABA), you'll be helping to expand the expertise of a network that already delivers comprehensive mental health, substance abuse and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services to members across the nation. \*

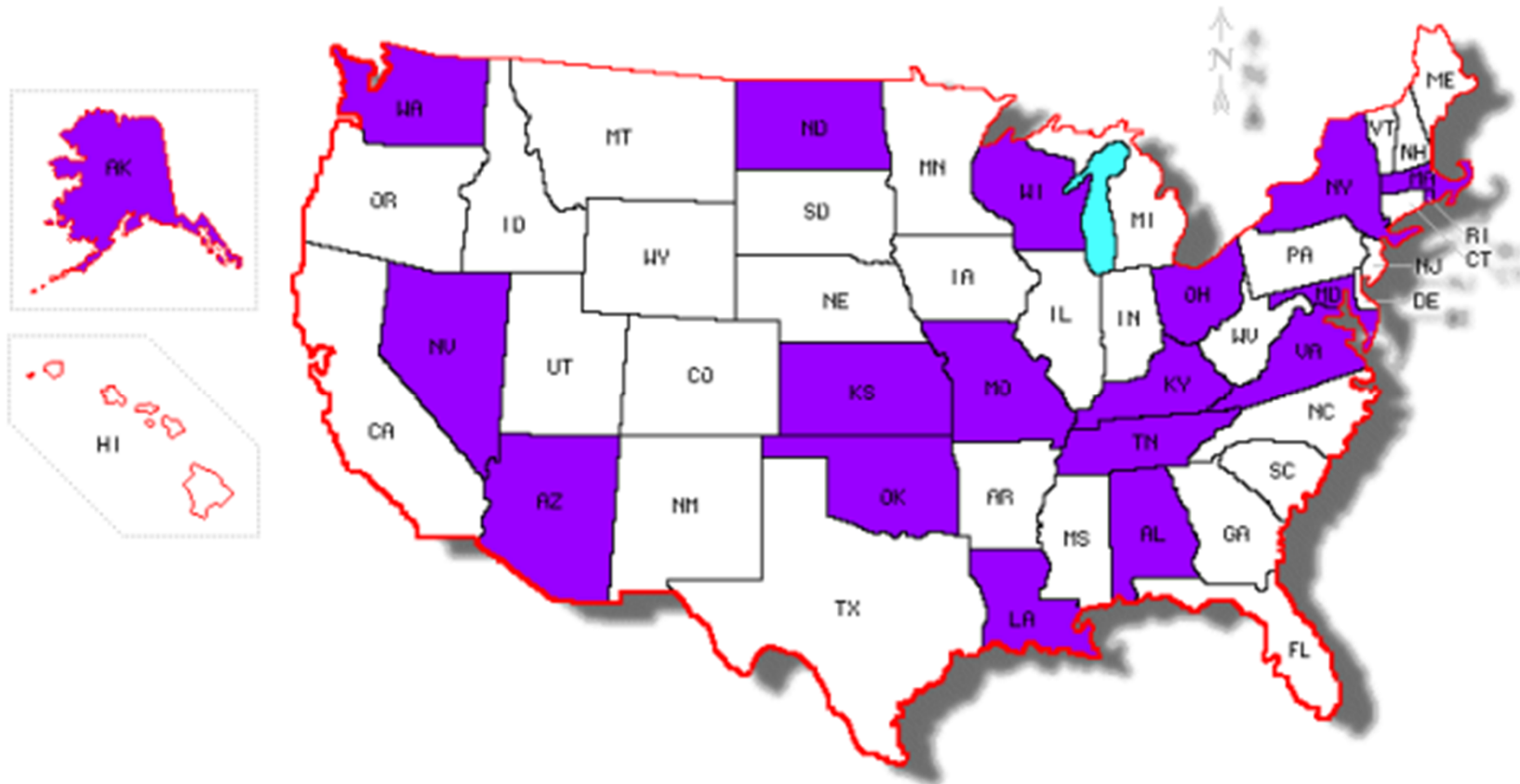
In order to start the credentialing/contracting process today\*\*:

- Go online to apply for membership\* in Aetna's network of health care professionals:  
[https://www.aetna.com/provider/bh\\_form.html](https://www.aetna.com/provider/bh_form.html).
- Please complete the Behavioral Health Professionals – Application Request.

If you already participate with Aetna and would like to treat Aetna patients with ASD, please reply via email to [AetnaBH-AppliedBehaviorAnalyst@AETNA.com](mailto:AetnaBH-AppliedBehaviorAnalyst@AETNA.com) and we will contact you with additional information.

Thank you for your consideration.

# 18 States with Behavior Analyst Licensure Laws



# Benefits of Licensure

- State specific consumer protection
- Parity with other professions
- Can be helpful with 3<sup>rd</sup> party reimbursement process

# **Benefits of basing state licensure on BACB credentials and standards**

- Assures that licensure requirements and practice of ABA are similar across locations
- Simplifies development of licensure statute and regulations
- Assures that licensees are regulated by both BACB and state regulatory entity, providing two layers of protection for consumers and professionals

# Autism Speaks



*The world's largest autism advocacy organization - is dedicated to increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders, to funding research into autism, and to advocating for the needs of affected families.*



**AUTISM SPEAKS™**  
It's time to listen.

[www.AutismSpeaks.org](http://www.AutismSpeaks.org)