



Recommendation

Washington Association for Behavior Analysis (WABA) is asking the legislature to:

1. Remove the certification requirements adopted under RCW 18.380 related to Certified Behavior Technicians, and
2. Include a requirement for successful completion of an examination approved by the secretary for the Licensed Assistant Behavior Analyst.

Introduction

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is the science of behavior and techniques generally involve teaching individuals more effective ways of behaving and working to change the social consequences of existing behavior. Treatment approaches based on ABA are empirically shown to be effective in a wide variety of areas.

(<https://www.bacb.com/about-behavior-analysis/>)

The state requirement to certify Behavior Technicians (i.e., CBT) has resulted in multiple unanticipated barriers to a wide range of consumers accessing necessary ABA services. Washington remains the only state requiring state certification for behavior technicians, who are providers working directly and exclusively under the supervision of other licensed professionals.

Behavior Technicians must perform their duties under the direct supervision and oversight of a Licensed Behavior Analyst. Additionally, national standards exist for the training, competency, and supervision of Assistant Behavior Analysts and Behavior Technicians (<https://www.bacb.com/rbt/>) and are firmly supported by WABA. Currently, Washington licensing standards for Assistant Behavior Analysts (i.e., LABA), differ from national standards in that they do not require demonstration of competency through an exam. This omission was an oversight in the original bill draft language, that is seeking to be rectified at this time.

Background

In 2015, Substitute Senate Bill 5488 became law creating behavior analysis credentials in Washington State (<http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bill%20Reports/Senate/5488%20SBA%20HLTH%2015.pdf>). These credentials became effective July 1, 2017: Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA), Licensed Assistant Behavior Analyst (LABA), and Certified Behavior Technician (CBT) (<https://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/ProfessionsNewReneworUpdate/AppliedBehaviorAnalysis>).

Context

The state certification of Behavior Technicians (CBT) has resulted in the following *unanticipated barriers to consumers'* access to necessary, adequate and appropriate services including:

- Reduced and delayed access to ABA services for WA residents in foster care, supported living arrangements, supported employment arrangements, and those receiving other services in mental health and emergency medical settings.
- Delays in consumers' access to services due to credentialing delays.

The certification requirement for behavior technicians has also resulted in *significant operational barriers for ABA providers* which ultimately impacts service costs for consumers. These barriers include:

- Extensive resource demands on providers supporting and maintaining new staff in meeting all certification requirements prior to submitting for CBT license, followed by variable processing wait periods of their license applications.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the LBA and LABA to ensure that all behavior technicians working under their direction obtain training, supervision and oversight to provide adequate and safe care to consumers.

Multiple discussions occurred with consumers, providers, state advocacy organizations, and state officials including Department of Health (DOH), DOH ABA Advisory Committee, Health Care Authority, and Division of Social and Health Services (DSHS), which have been unsuccessful in addressing these barriers for consumers and providers.

Conclusion

WABA concludes that eliminating the CBT credential and adding the completion of an exam for LABAs through Washington State RCW18.380 is the most efficient and simple solution.

Please support WABA's effort to 1) remove the state certification requirements adopted under RCW 18.380 related to Certified Behavior Technicians and 2) include a requirement for successful completion of an examination approved by the secretary for the Licensed Assistant Behavior Analyst.