

Position Statement on Integrity and Ethics in Autism Service Delivery

The Washington Association for Applied Behavior Analysis (WABA) is deeply troubled by recent reports of Medicaid and insurance fraud within the autism services sector, specifically reported in two Wall Street Journal articles on March 10, 2026.

See: [“The Medicaid Autism Racket”](#) [March 8, 2026] and [“The Boom in Autism Therapy is Medicaid’s Largest Jackpot.”](#)

We’d like to validate the frustration and hurt many of you, our members, may be feeling. These articles paint our field with a broad and often misleading brush, which presents as completely inappropriate and unprofessional journalism to those of us on the ground. It is painful to see the tarnished image of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) these narratives create. Please know that WABA recognizes and stands firmly behind the overwhelming majority of ABA providers in Washington who deliver high-quality, ethically sound, and medically necessary services day in and day out. You operate with profound integrity, prioritize the outcomes of the individuals we serve, and tirelessly navigate complex regulatory systems to ensure Washington families receive the care they so deeply deserve.

However, we must also address the isolated instances of unethical behavior head-on. When the integrity of our practice is compromised by fraudulent criminal activity, it threatens the reputation of our entire field and jeopardizes the vital access to care that our families rely on. We stand in resolute alignment with the Council of Autism Service Providers (CASP) in condemning any practice that prioritizes corporate profit over clinical necessity. Fraudulent billing and the manipulation of service hours are not just legal violations; they are a profound betrayal of the families who invite us into their lives.

See: [CASP Responds to Wall Street Journal Articles](#)

WABA’s [Mission](#) is to build a cohesive group of individuals dedicated to promoting the ethical research, education, and practice of behavior analysis in Washington state. Exploitative business practices directly undermine this mission. When the integrity of our practice is compromised by unethical, fraudulent criminal activity, it threatens the reputation of our entire field and, more importantly, jeopardizes the access to care that Washington families deserve.

To ensure our field remains relevant, trusted, and effective, we call upon all providers in our state to uphold the following pillars of practice:

- **Clinical Necessity as the Sole Driver:** Treatment recommendations must be based strictly on the individual needs of the child. We must reject "one-size-fits-all" billing mandates or corporate pressures

to maximize hours at the expense of clinical appropriateness. Please refer to the CASP ABA Practice Guidelines.

- Commitment to Ethical Practice: As a cohesive professional community, we must hold ourselves to the highest standards of the BACB Ethics Code.
- Transparency and Accountability: Providers of ABA Therapy should welcome oversight and must act as transparent partners with Medicaid and private insurers. *Maintaining the public trust is essential to the long-term viability of Applied Behavior Analysis.*
- Supporting Our Clinicians: We must protect providers [BCBAs/LBAs, BCaBAs/LABAs and CBTs/RBTs] on the front lines, ensuring they have the autonomy to make ethical clinical decisions without fear of reprisal or pressure to meet arbitrary financial quotas.
- Commitment to Regulatory Compliance: We encourage all providers to stay up to date with local, state, and federal regulations governing ABA services, including payer requirements, documentation standards, supervision expectations, and labor laws.

WABA also recommends maintaining strong internal compliance practices and regularly reviewing guidance from the following entities*:

- [BACB Ethics Code](#)
- [Council for Autism Service Providers](#)
- [ABA Coding Coalition](#)
- [WA Health Care Authority - ABA](#)
- [WA Department of Health - ABA Licensing](#)
- [WA Department of Labor & Industries](#)
- [WA Office of Insurance Commissioner](#)
- [ABA Ethics Hotline](#)

Sincerely,

WABA Executive Committee

Ralph Pampino - President

Chelsea Deaconson - Secretary

Carla-Marie Myers – Member-At-Large

**This is not a comprehensive list and is meant to serve as a guide.*