



Introducing the Department of Health and
Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Applied Behavior
Analysis (ABA) Medicaid Benefit

Regional Forums
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What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

- What is ABA?
 - Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a scientifically validated approach to understanding behavior and how it is affected by the environment
 - In this context, “behavior” refers to actions and skills
 - “Environment” includes any influence- physical or social- that might change or be changed by one’s behavior
- ABA principles are used for individuals diagnosed with Autism to:
 - Reduce maladaptive behaviors
 - Increase skills such as communication, social skills, daily living activities
 - Bridge the gap between chronological age and developmental age

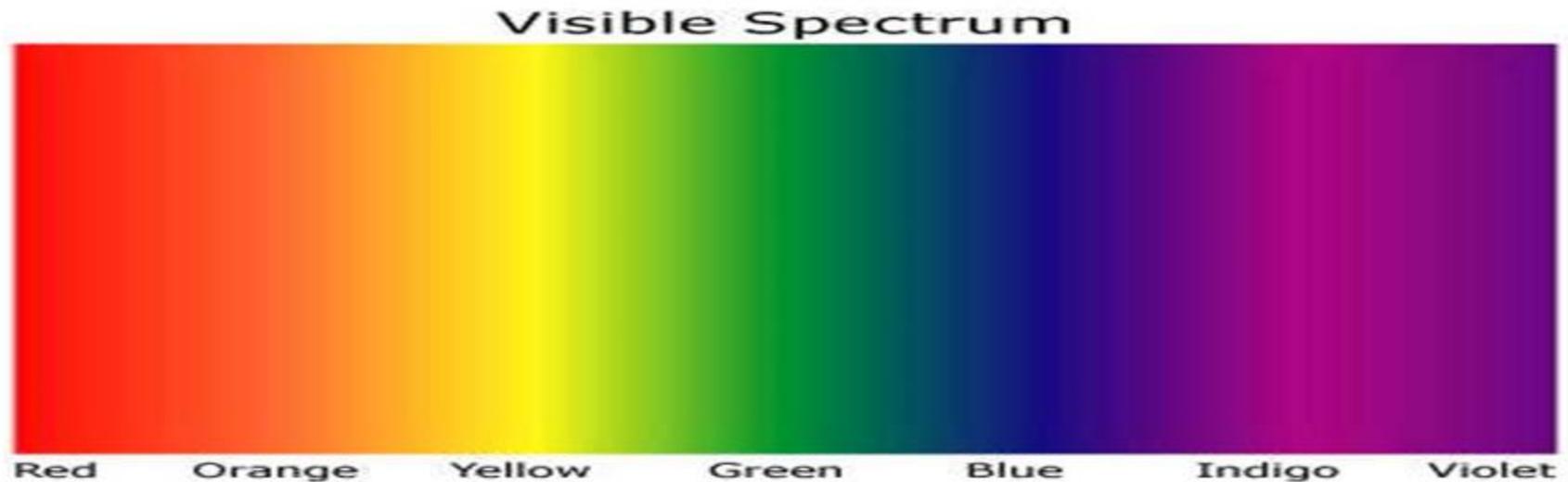
What is ABA?

- ABA is individualized treatment
 - Effective ABA treatment is not a “one size fits all” approach. ABA treatment for one individual will differ from the treatment for another individual
- Common principles of ABA treatment
 - Treatment goals are based on the individual’s current level of functioning and are developmentally appropriate
 - Goals are broken down into manageable steps
 - On-going progress is regularly measured and evaluated
 - Treatment is adjusted based on quantifiable data and medical necessity
 - May use a variety of behavioral analytic techniques
 - Parents/caregivers may receive training
 - Training is structured as part of the client’s regular routine
 - Treatment is based on positive reinforcement

Autism at a Glance

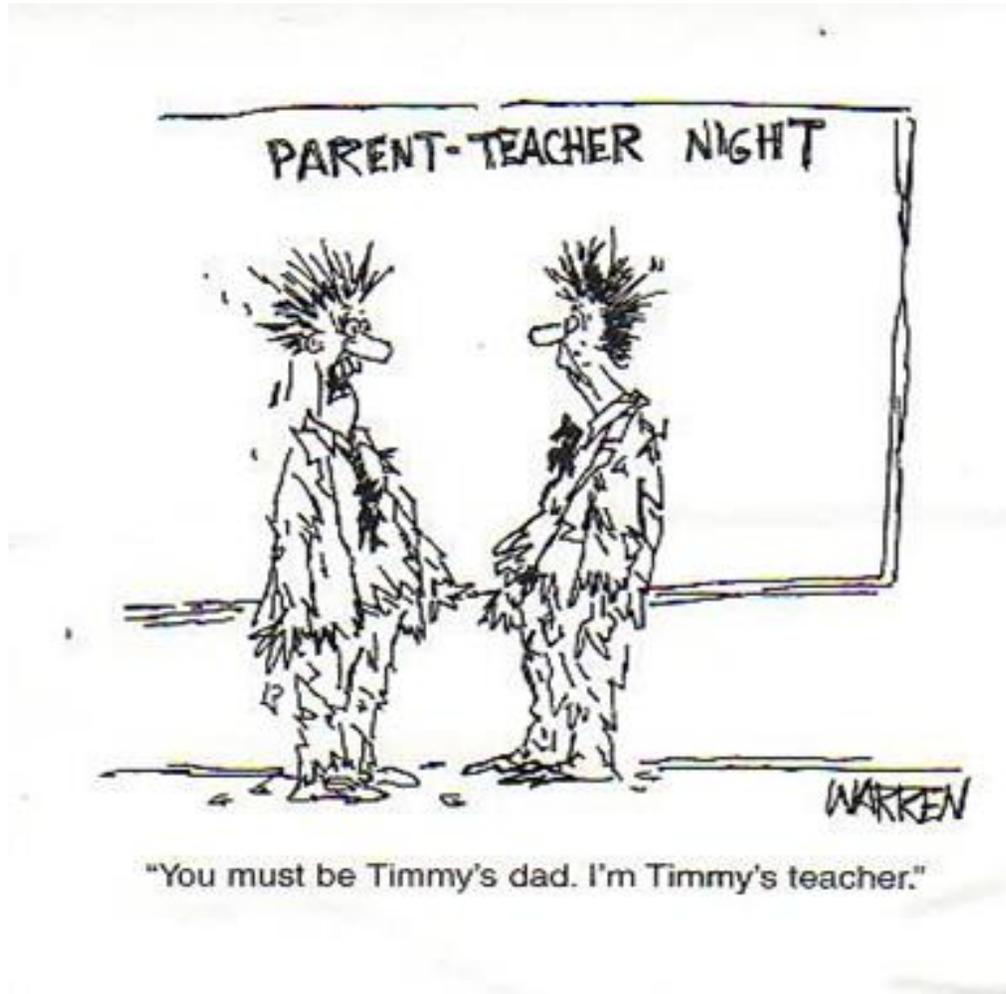
- Autism is marked by deficits in social and communication skills, repetitive patterns of behavior, and causing clinically significant impairment in functioning
 - Severity varies across symptoms
 - Rate of occurrence is currently 1 in 68
 - The disorder is almost 5 times more common in boys (1 in 42) than girls (1 in 189)
 - Autism occurs in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups

Autism – Spectrum Disorder



Autism is known as a “spectrum disorder” because although individuals may be diagnosed with Autism they will not display the same set of symptoms or severity. In fact, many individuals with Autism may show their own set of exceptional abilities.

Autism is hard



Autism Services are now a mandated EPSDT benefit under Medicaid

CMS Guidance

On July 7, 2014, **CMS issued guidance mandating that states cover medically necessary autism services** for individuals under the age of 21.

- **Coverage:** States must provide autism services and submit a revised state plan amendment
- **Guidance on how to cover:** Per CMS guidance, requested services cannot be denied or delayed while awaiting submission of a state plan amendment
- ABA services are covered within the category of Behavioral Health Therapy (BHT) services

About the DHMH ABA Medicaid Benefit

- The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) will cover medically necessary Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy services for Medical Assistance Program enrolled members under the age of 21 beginning **January 1, 2017**
- Beacon Health Options administers the Maryland ABA program and provides clinical, operational and provider assistance and expertise

Who is Eligible for ABA Services?

- Children and adolescents under the age of 21 who meet the following requirements are eligible for services:
 - Enrolled in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program;
 - Live in the community
 - Have been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) through a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation; and
 - Are referred to Beacon Health Options for ABA therapy services

Who can diagnose Autistic Spectrum Disorder?

- Pediatricians
- Developmental Pediatricians
- Nurse Practitioners
- Pediatric Neurologists
- Child Psychiatrists
- Clinical Psychologists
- Neuropsychologists

Who Can Provide ABA Services?

- The following appropriately certified and licensed providers are able to deliver ABA services:
 - Psychologists – operating within the scope of their practice
 - BCBA – Ds, BCBAs, BCaBAs, RBTs and Behavior Technicians
- Providers must be enrolled through Maryland Medicaid and registered with Beacon Health Options in order to provide ABA services

What Services are Offered and Reimbursed for ABA?

- ABA Assessment or ABA Reassessment
 - Administered by a Psychologist, BCBA-D or BCBA
- Direct Therapy
 - Administered by any ABA provider
 - *Direct therapy can also be administered to more than one child at a time in a group setting by a single provider*
- Supervision
 - Administered by a Psychologist, BCBA-D or BCBA
- Parent Training
 - *Individual Parent Training may or may not involve the presence of the child as clinically appropriate*
 - Administered by a Psychologist, BCBA-D, BCBA or BCaBA
 - *Group Parent Training*
 - Administered by a Psychologist, BCBA-D or BCBA
- Social Skills Group
 - Administered by a Psychologist, BCBA-D or BCBA

Administration of the ABA Program

- **All ABA services require prior authorization from Beacon**
- Authorizations are valid for a maximum of 180 days
- At the end of the authorization period, the Psychologist, BCBA-D or BCBA will complete a reassessment to determine if ABA services continue to be medically necessary
- ABA services must be provided in the home and community settings, including clinics where there is a plan for generalization to the home environment
- ABA services will no longer be medically necessary if the long term goals are met or if the participant no longer demonstrates progress towards treatment goals

Beacon Health Options Autism Services Model



Beacon has established a set of clinical guidelines that ensure high quality

- Early diagnosis is imperative, including a developmental assessment and early intervention screening
- Comprehensive functional assessments are authorized for up to 8 hours
- Parent or caretaker may be involved in treatment
- Beacon BCBA senior care managers and care coordinators participate in peer-to-peer collaboration with our network BCBA providers in case reviews and on any clinical and quality concerns
- Authorization periods are 6 months; and reassessments should be done one month prior to the end of an authorization period to determine progress to date and continued medical necessity
- Require a minimum of one hour of direct supervision for every 10 hours of direct services

Core Components of Beacon's Clinical Model for ABA

Intake and Screening

- Comprehensive intake
- Diagnostic verification
- Assessment of school-based and other services in place
- Referrals for Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluations and Functional Assessments

Peer to Peer CM

- Senior Level BCBA's serve as Senior CMs
- Authorizations based on assessment, treatment plan, and proprietary MNC
- Real-time review of clinical data supports peer-to-peer intervention with providers and re-authorizations

IT Platform

- Clinical and encounter data can be directly entered by clinicians into provider portal as part of billing process
- Triggers for review based on treatment progress, supervision, etc.

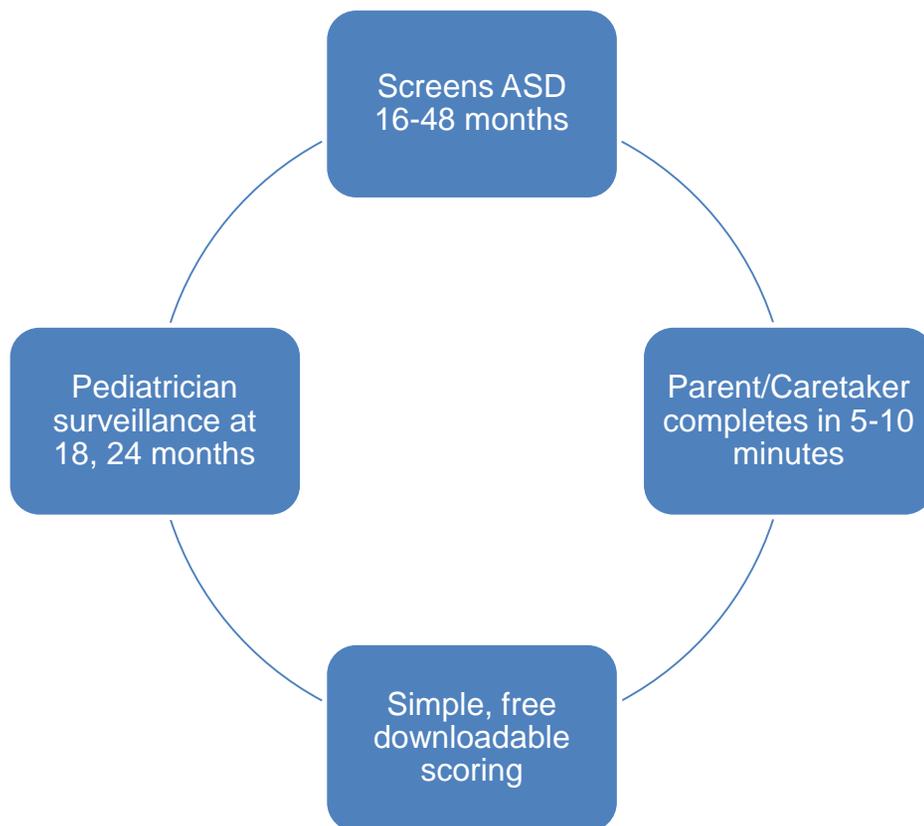
Network Mgmt.

- Contract and credential BCBA's and behavioral therapists (para-professionals)
- BCBA provider engagement through data sharing, communicating updates, and collaborative process improvement strategies

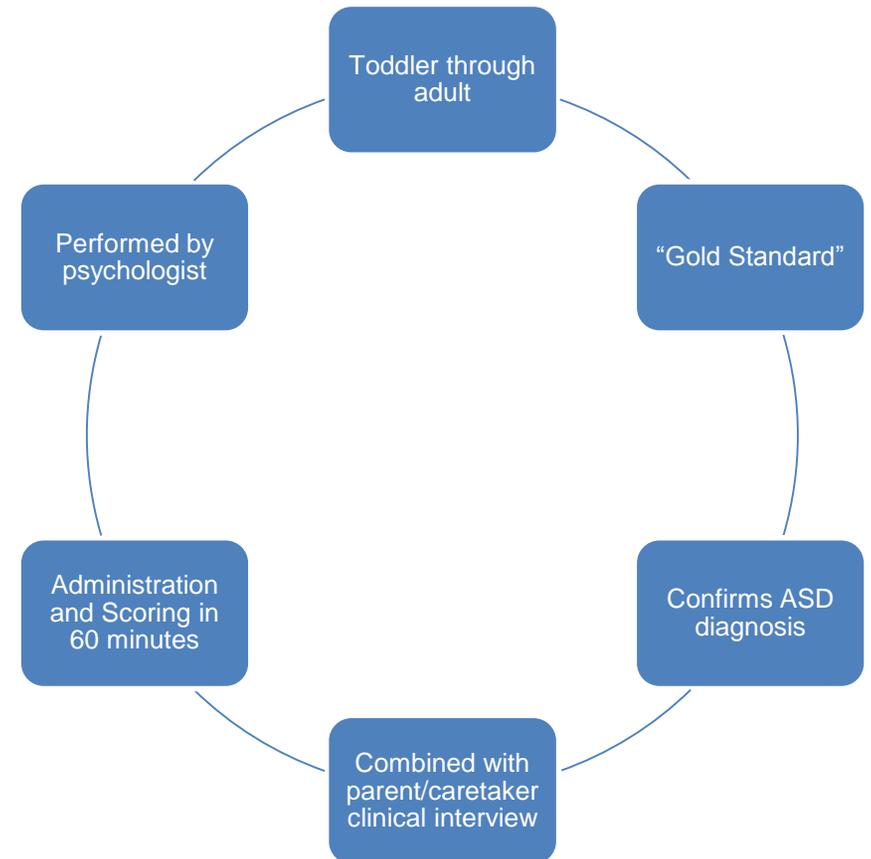
Integrated set of services to support outcomes management

Autism Screening vs. Diagnosis

MCHAT: Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers

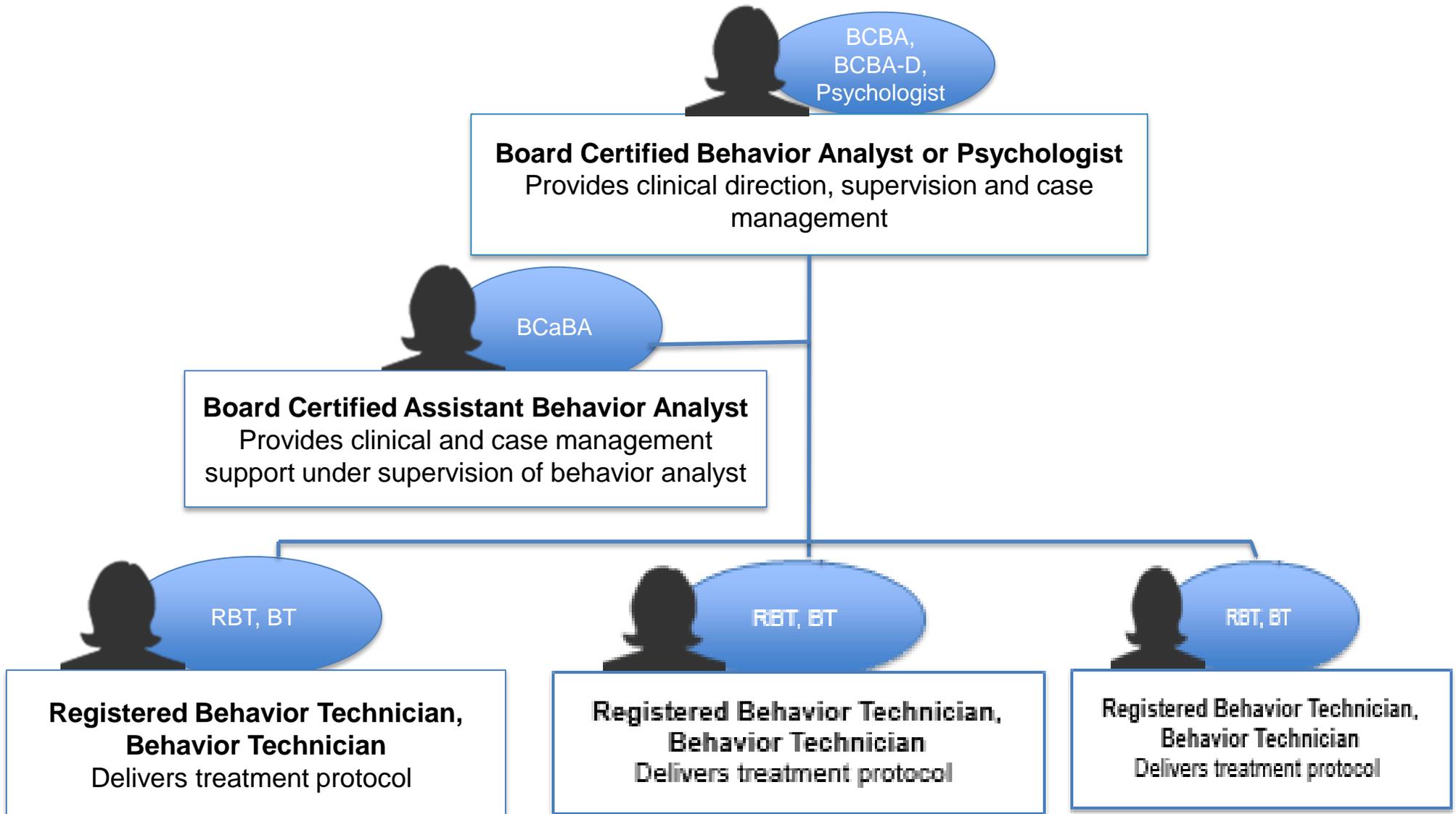


ADOS-2: Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule



Structure of Oversight and Delivery of Services

Below is an example of a tiered service delivery model. This type of approach is considered cost-effective at delivering desired treatment outcomes.



Upcoming Provider Trainings

- ProviderConnect: Contract Introduction and Overview
- ProviderConnect: Clinical Data Entry
- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)
Assessment/Reassessment Format

For More Information

- Questions about ABA services can be submitted via e-mail to: Dhmmh.aba@Maryland.gov
- If you have an interest in providing these services or you have any questions around ABA please contact Beacon at:
abamarylandproviderrelations@beaconhealthoptions.com

Thank you

