WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §33-16-3v

§33-16-3v. Required coverage for treatment of autism spectrum disorders.

(a) Any insurer who, on or after January 1, 2012, delivers, renews or issues a policy of group accident and sickness insurance in this state under the provisions of this article shall include coverage for diagnosis, evaluation and treatment of autism spectrum disorder in individuals ages eighteen months to eighteen years. To be eligible for coverage and benefits under this section, the individual must be diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder at age eight or younger. Such policy shall provide coverage for treatments that are medically necessary and ordered or prescribed by a licensed physician or licensed psychologist and in accordance with a treatment plan developed from a comprehensive evaluation by a certified behavior analyst for an individual diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

(b) Coverage shall include, but not be limited to, applied behavior analysis. Applied behavior analysis shall be provided or supervised by a certified behavior analyst. The annual maximum benefit for applied behavior analysis required by this subsection shall be in an amount not to exceed $30,000 per individual, for three consecutive years from the date treatment commences. At the conclusion of the third year, required coverage shall be in an amount not to exceed $2,000 per month, until the individual reaches eighteen years of age, as long as the treatment is medically necessary and in accordance with a treatment plan developed by a certified behavior analyst pursuant to a comprehensive evaluation or reevaluation of the individual. This section shall not be construed as limiting, replacing or affecting any obligation to provide services to an individual under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq., as amended from time to time or other publicly funded programs. Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring reimbursement for services provided by public school personnel.

(c) The certified behavior analyst shall file progress reports with the insurer semiannually. In order for treatment to continue, the insurer must receive objective evidence or a clinically supportable statement of expectation that:

(1) The individual's condition is improving in response to treatment; and

(2) A maximum improvement is yet to be attained; and

(3) There is an expectation that the anticipated improvement is attainable in a reasonable and generally predictable period of time.

(d) For purposes of this section, the term:

(1) "Applied Behavior Analysis" means the design, implementation, and evaluation of environmental modifications using behavioral stimuli and consequences, to produce socially significant improvement in human behavior, including the use of direct observation,

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measurement, and functional analysis of the relationship between environment and behavior.

(2) "Autism spectrum disorder" means any pervasive developmental disorder, including autistic disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, Rett syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, or Pervasive Development Disorder as defined in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association.

(3) "Certified behavior analyst" means an individual who is certified by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board or certified by a similar nationally recognized organization.

(4) "Objective evidence" means standardized patient assessment instruments, outcome measurements tools or measurable assessments of functional outcome. Use of objective measures at the beginning of treatment, during and after treatment is recommended to quantify progress and support justifications for continued treatment. The tools are not required, but their use will enhance the justification for continued treatment.

(e) The provisions of this section do not apply to small employers. For purposes of this section a small employer means any person, firm, corporation, partnership or association actively engaged in business in the State of West Virginia who, during the preceding calendar year, employed an average of no more than twenty-five eligible employees.

(f) To the extent that the application of this section for autism spectrum disorder causes an increase of at least one percent of actual total costs of coverage for the plan year the insurer may apply additional cost containment measures.

(g) To the extent that the provisions of this section require benefits that exceed the essential health benefits specified under section 1302(b) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Pub. L. No. 111-148, as amended, the specific benefits that exceed the specified essential health benefits shall not be required of a health benefit plan when the plan is offered by a health care insurer in this state.

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