

# Obtaining a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation for autism and finding treatment

For Blue Cross commercial, Medicare Plus Blue<sup>SM</sup>,  
Blue Care Network commercial and BCN Advantage<sup>SM</sup>

Revised June 13, 2025

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Before an autism treatment provider can request prior authorization for applied behavior analysis, or ABA, from Blue Cross Behavioral Health<sup>SM</sup>, the member must obtain an autism comprehensive diagnostic evaluation.

When requesting prior authorization for ABA, the autism treatment provider must submit documentation from the member's comprehensive diagnostic evaluation that shows that the member meets the criteria for an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis.

## Notes:

- Prior authorization is not required for the behavioral health components of the evaluation.
- The autism evaluation center or the other autism evaluation providers involved in completing the evaluation will need to identify the medical specialists who will be evaluating the member. For some BCN commercial members, a referral from the primary care provider is required for each medical specialist who will see the member during the evaluation process.

**Important:** A comprehensive diagnostic re-evaluation is **not** required by Blue Cross Behavioral Health. It's optional, based on clinical need. This doesn't apply to the reassessments that licensed behavior analysts and others complete as needed once autism treatment has begun.

Keep reading for more information.

## What's required in a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation

The member's comprehensive diagnostic evaluation must:

- Contain diagnostic criteria that are based on the current version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, which is published by the American Psychiatric Association

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- Be completed by a licensed physician, a licensed psychologist or another licensed clinician who is qualified to diagnose autism by state licensure and related training

## How to obtain a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation

There are **two** ways to obtain a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation:

- **For members in Michigan:** The comprehensive diagnostic evaluation can be conducted by an approved autism evaluation center, or AAEC, in Michigan. Here's how this works:
  1. The AAEC arranges for the member to be evaluated by each discipline.
  2. The AAEC gives the member or the member's parent or guardian (as applicable) the results of the comprehensive diagnostic evaluation.

Note: In addition, the AAEC may, as an option, record the results on the [Autism comprehensive diagnostic evaluation results form](#) and give the form, along with the results, to the member or to the member's parent or guardian.

3. When the member or the member's parent or guardian has the comprehensive diagnostic evaluation results (and the form, if it was completed), he or she gives them to an autism treatment provider.
4. If the treatment plan from the comprehensive diagnostic evaluation includes a recommendation for applied behavior analysis, the autism treatment provider submits a prior authorization request for ABA services to Blue Cross Behavioral Health. Attach the results of the evaluation to the request.

Note: If the comprehensive diagnostic evaluation results are also recorded on the [Autism comprehensive diagnostic evaluation results form](#), the autism treatment provider should include the form when submitting the prior authorization request.

For more information, refer to the "Finding approved autism evaluation centers" section of this document.

- **For members in Michigan and in other states:** The member or the member's parent or guardian (as applicable) can work with a primary care provider and/or independent autism evaluation providers. Here's how this works:
  1. The providers evaluate the member.
  2. The providers give the member or the member's parent or guardian the results of the comprehensive diagnostic evaluation.

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Note: In addition, the provider may, as an option, record the results on the [Autism comprehensive diagnostic evaluation results form](#) and give the form, along with the results, to the member or to the member's parent or guardian.

3. The member or the member's parent or guardian gives the results (and the form, if it was completed) to an autism treatment provider.
4. If the treatment plan from the comprehensive diagnostic evaluation includes a recommendation for ABA, the autism treatment provider submits a prior authorization request for ABA services to Blue Cross Behavioral Health. Attach the results of the evaluation to the request.

Note: If the comprehensive diagnostic evaluation results are also recorded on the [Autism comprehensive diagnostic evaluation results form](#), the autism treatment provider should include the form when submitting the prior authorization request.

For more information, refer to the "Finding independent autism evaluation providers" section of this document.

### Finding approved autism evaluation centers

One way a member or the member's parent or guardian (as applicable) can obtain a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation is through an approved autism evaluation center.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network continue to build a network of approved autism evaluation centers from qualified facilities. The autism evaluation centers listed in the table below have been approved by Blue Cross and BCN. These centers:

- Meet criteria developed in partnership with the Michigan behavioral health care provider community
- Have shown a comprehensive approach to the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder that leads to the most accurate diagnoses available

For more information about autism benefits and applied behavior analysis, visit [bcbsm.com/autismfaq](https://bcbsm.com/autismfaq). Members can also call the behavioral health number on the back of their Blue Cross or BCN ID card.

**Important!** For the most current contact information for the providers listed in the table below, check with these centers directly and confirm location details when scheduling.

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Center	Location and telephone number
Acorn Health	<b>Gaylord area:</b> 940 N. Center Ave. Gaylord, MI 49735 Phone: 1-844-244-1818
	<b>Grand Rapids area:</b> 1000 E. Paris SE, Suite 160 Grand Rapids, MI 49546 Phone: 1-844-244-1818
	<b>Traverse City area:</b> 1363 Douglas Dr., Suite 104 Traverse City, MI 49696 Phone: 1-844-244-1818
Beaumont Children's Center for Exceptional Families	18501 Rotunda Dr. Dearborn, MI 48124 Phone: 313-996-1960
Beaumont Center for Human Development	30503 Greenfield Rd. Southfield, MI 48076 Phone: 248-691-4744
BRAINS	3292 N. Evergreen Dr. NE Grand Rapids, MI 49525 Phone: 616-365-8920
Central Autism Assessment & Treatment Center (Central Michigan University)	1101 Health Professions Bldg. Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859 Phone: 989-774-3904
Covenant HealthCare Center for Autism	2919 E. Wilder Rd. Bay City, MI 48706 Phone: 989-671-5738
Easterseals Michigan	<b>Southeast Michigan:</b> 2399 E. Walton Blvd. Auburn Hills, MI 48326 Phone: 248-475-6400

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Center	Location and telephone number
	<b>Grand Rapids area:</b> 4065 East Hills Court SE Grand Rapids, MI 49546 Phone: 616-942-2081
Generational Resilience Opportunity & Wellness (GROW) Center for autism spectrum disorders and intellectual developmental disabilities	Virtual Phone: 313-972-3060
Helen DeVos Behavioral Health Clinic – Spectrum Health	35 Michigan St., Suite 5201 Grand Rapids, MI 49503 Phone: 616-267-2830
Henry Ford Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities	1 Ford Place Pediatric Admin, 4B Detroit, MI 48202 Phone: 313-972-9009
Hope Network Center for Autism	2875 Eyde Parkway 1st Floor East Lansing, MI 48823 Phone: 1-844-969-0252
Judson Center	<b>Flint area:</b> 4318 Miller Rd. Flint, MI 48507 Phone: 1-866-558-3766
	<b>Royal Oak area:</b> 4410 W. 13 Mile Rd. Royal Oak, MI 48073 Phone: 248-549-4339
Mary Free Bed Kids – Autism Spectrum Disorder Program	235 Wealthy Street SE Grand Rapids, MI 49503 Phone: 616-840-8807 Fax: 616-840-9684

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Center	Location and telephone number
Michigan Medicine (formerly University of Michigan Health System)	<p><b>For patients 5 years of age and younger:</b></p> <p>Mott Autism Collaborative – Multidisciplinary Developmental Evaluation Clinic (M-DEC)</p> <p>1540 E. Hospital Drive – Floor 5, Reception B Ann Arbor, MI 48109 Phone: 734-232-7513</p> <p><b>For patients 6 years to 10 years of age (on or before the 10th birthday):</b></p> <p>Mott Autism Collaborative – Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics Clinic</p> <p>1540 E. Hospital Drive – Floor 6, Reception C Ann Arbor, MI 48109 Phone: 734-232-7513</p> <p><b>For patients 18 months through 17 years, 11 months of age (before the 18th birthday):</b></p> <p>Multidisciplinary Autistic Spectrum Disorders Clinic (Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)</p> <p>4250 Plymouth Rd. Ann Arbor, MI 48109 Phone: 734-764-0231</p>
Michigan State University Health Care Psychiatry Clinic	<p>West Fee Hall, Suite B119 909 Wilson Rd. East Lansing, MI 48824 Phone: 517-353-3070</p>
MyMichigan Health Pediatric Center for Rehabilitation and Behavioral Health (formerly MidMichigan Health)	<p>32 S. Homer Rd. Midland, MI 48640 Phone: 989-488-5274 Fax: 989-495-0532</p>
Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services	<p>300 68th Street SE P.O. Box 165 Grand Rapids, MI 49548 Phone: 616-258-7500</p>

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Center	Location and telephone number
University Center for the Child and Family (University of Michigan)	500 East Washington St., Suite 100 Ann Arbor, MI 48104 Phone: 734-764-9466
UP Health System Marquette – Specialty Clinic	850 W. Baraga Ave. Marquette, MI 49855 Phone: 906-449-4880
WMed Pediatric Autism Center	<b>Accepts only patients younger than 6 years old</b> 1000 Oakland Drive 2nd Floor Kalamazoo, MI 49008 Phone: 269-337-6400 Fax: 269-337-6428

### Finding independent autism evaluation providers

Another way a member or the member's parent or guardian can obtain a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation is through a primary care provider or through independent autism evaluation providers.

A member or the member's parent or guardian may work with a primary care provider or independent autism evaluation providers to make or confirm a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Sometimes, the primary care provider will work together with one or more independent autism evaluation providers to complete the evaluation.

Independent autism evaluation providers may include pediatricians, developmental pediatricians, pediatric neurologists, neurologists, child psychologists, child psychiatrists, adult psychiatrists, neuropsychologists, psychologists, and speech and language therapists.

To find an independent autism evaluation provider:

1. Go to [bcbsm.com](https://bcbsm.com) and click *Find Care*.
2. Click *Individuals and families*.
3. Under Find a Doctor, click *Search without logging in*.
4. If prompted, choose a location.
5. In the upper-right corner of the screen, do one of the following:
  - Click the *I don't know my network* button.



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- Click the *Change your location or plan* link and then click *I don't know my network*.
6. Click the *Find a different plan* button.
  7. Select the appropriate plan and click the *Confirm selection* button.
  8. Do one of these:
    - Click *Doctors by specialty* and in the search field, type one of the specialties listed above or type "Autism".
    - Click *Places by type* and in the search field, type "Autism".
  9. Click the search icon.
  10. In the search results, locate a provider.
  11. Click the provider's name and review the information. Make sure the provider accepts the plan you have.

## Finding a licensed behavior analyst, for treatment

Members who meet the requirements for receiving ABA must obtain that treatment from a licensed behavior analyst\*. The analyst must request prior authorization from Blue Cross Behavioral Health before providing those services, for your treatment to be eligible for coverage.

**Note:** In addition, the licensed behavior analyst must be a provider for the member's health plan.

The names of licensed behavior analysts are available in the provider search at **bcbsm.com**. To access those names, complete the following steps:

1. Visit [bcbsm.com](https://bcbsm.com) and click *Find Care*.
2. Under Find a Doctor, click *Search without logging in*.
3. If prompted, choose a location.
4. In the upper-right corner of the screen, do one of the following:
  - Click the *I don't know my network* button.
  - Click the *Change your location or plan* link and then click *I don't know my network*.
5. Click the *Find a different plan* button.



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6. Select the appropriate plan and click the *Confirm selection* button.
7. Click *Doctors by specialty*.
8. In the search field, type “ABA Therapy” and click the search icon.
9. In the search results, locate a behavior analyst.
10. Click the behavior analyst’s name and review the information.

Note: In the Board Certification field (in the About section), you’ll see “None.” This is because the search does not display board certification data for nonphysician practitioners such as behavior analysts.

### About

GROUP AFFILIATIONS	GENDER	BOARD CERTIFICATION None
HOSPITAL AFFILIATIONS None	LANGUAGES SPOKEN English	EDUCATION None




You can be sure that **all** behavior analysts who appear in the search results are licensed.

11. Click the link in the *Plans Accepted* field (in the Locations section) and confirm that the behavior analyst accepts your plan.

### Locations

In-network Not a primary care provider Accepting new patients at this location

SPECIALTIES Behavior Analyst	LOCATION SERVICES Wheelchair accessible, Offers evening and/or weekend hours	STAFF LANGUAGES English	AMBULATORY SURGERY PROVIDER(S) None
AREAS OF FOCUS Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) for Autism, Autism	REMOTE SERVICES Telehealth	CONTACT Main: Email: Web: Physical Fax:	CARECENTRIX PROVIDERS None
OFFICE HOURS	PLANS ACCEPTED <a href="#">90 plans accepted</a>	QUALITY SCORE None	SPINE & JOINT CARE PROGRAM None
	MEDICAL CARE GROUP None	NPI	NORTHWOOD PROVIDER None
	QUALITY None		



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### Contact us for assistance

Here's how to contact us for assistance:

- If a provider or member has a concern about obtaining an evaluation or has questions about past autism testing, screening and clinical information, call Blue Cross Behavioral Health.
- Members can call the behavioral health number on the back of their Blue Cross or BCN ID card.

For more information about autism benefits, visit [bcbsm.com/autismfaq](https://bcbsm.com/autismfaq).

\*Effective Jan. 7, 2020, behavior analysts must be licensed by the state of Michigan to be reimbursed by Blue Cross or BCN. For Medicare Advantage members, ABA treatment must be performed by a Medicare-approved provider type for whom ABA is within their scope of practice.