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CATHY BETTS
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STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 12, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SCR 132 - REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES.**

Hearing: April 13, 2023, 9:15 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) offers comments.

PURPOSE: This resolution requests that DHS Med-QUEST Division (MQD) take steps necessary to ensure that adequate provider rates are established for applied behavioral analysis services (ABA); to assess current reimbursement rates for ABA; and to submit a report of its findings and recommendations on appropriate reimbursement rate increases, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2024.

MQD can assess reimbursement rates for ABA services and submit a report on its findings to the Legislature no later than twenty days before the convening of the Regular Session of 2024. As background, when the Medicaid reimbursement rates were developed for ABA, MQD analyzed other payers of Tri-Care and available commercial rates and matched them. Currently, the primary utilized service code is differentiated by the provider level, e.g., Licensed and Board Certified Behavioral Analyst, Board Certified Assistant Behavioral Analyst,

or Registered Behavioral Technician. This ABA rate paid by MQD continues to be equivalent to Tri-Care for two of the three providers. Additionally, a brief review of several other states' Medicaid fee schedules for ABA showed that Hawaii rates tend to be higher than most and about the same as others. A more comprehensive analysis can be conducted as it is well understood that all health care providers face challenges, including those providing ABA services, particularly on the neighbor islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

Written Testimony

Senate Committee on Human Services

Thursday, April 13, 2023 / 9:15 am
Conference Room 329, Hawai'i State Capitol

By

Christine K. Walton, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA
President, Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi, Inc.

SCR132/SR152– REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES.

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and members of the committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of** SCR132/SR152 which appropriates funding for Med-Quest division for non-covered or under-covered behavioral health services for med-Quest beneficiaries.

I am the President of Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi, Inc., a Kaka'ako-based clinic that has been serving people with autism for over 15 years. At our clinic, we provide applied behavior analysis (ABA), which is a medically necessary, empirically validated treatment approach for children diagnosed with autism and other related disorders. Since the passing of Luke's Law in 2015, which requires health insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism, there has been no change to the Medicaid fee schedule for ABA.

The operational costs of running a clinic have increased significantly since 2015. Specifically, costs related to rent, health insurance for employees, the IRS standard mileage reimbursement rate for employees who commute to the families' homes or other community sites, have all increased.

As a direct result of no increases to the Medicaid fee schedule for ABA, we have been struggling with hiring. Interviewees request competitive wages, comparable to school-based services which reimburse at a higher rate. We not only struggle with recruiting the best providers, but also in retaining our most qualified providers, where several have relocated to the mainland where the cost of living is lower and fee schedules are higher. We are simply not able to serve clients due to the challenges of recruiting and retaining providers, resulting in a current wait list for services of approximately 3 years. While the passage of Luke's Law was a monumental advancement in securing services for the people of Hawai'i, it is not

impactful if those it was meant to ensure services for cannot find providers.

In conclusion, in order to provide medically necessary services, funding for Med-Quest division for non-covered or under-covered behavioral health services for Med-Quest beneficiaries must be increased.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 6:26:58 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suzanne Ely	Maui Learning Academy	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state.



Committee on Human Services

Thursday, April 13, 2023
9:15 a.m.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 329
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

SUPPORT SCR 132 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Hawai'i Association for Behavior Analysis (HABA) we thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SCR 132 which requests the department of human services Med-QUEST division take steps necessary to ensure that adequate provider rates are established for applied behavior analysis services. Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is a medically necessary service provided for QUEST beneficiaries under the age of 21 with an autism diagnosis for intensive behavioral therapy (IBT), as mandated by section 1905(r) of the Social Security Act for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT). Autism is classified as a mental health condition, included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) and ABA treatment is the leading behavioral health treatment to ameliorate symptoms associated with this diagnosis and focuses on improving independence and decreasing the level of supports and services needed over the lifetime.

Providers across the state have reported they are not able to meet the needs of QUEST members largely due to difficulty hiring and retaining providers given our high cost of living and the demand for increased wages. Reimbursement rates for QUEST services were set in 2015 and have not increased, creating a hardship for behavioral health providers. This has resulted in significant delays for beneficiaries to access services, as well as not being able to meet the full service needs for children and families in our state.

Below market reimbursement rates—the current reimbursement rate for Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) is below market rate in Hawaii. The American Medical Association (AMA) Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) codes for ABA services are carrier priced, meaning the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\) Medicare Physician Fee Schedule \(MPFS\)](#) does not currently set rates for our services. **This means that other measures that are focused on bringing Medicaid payments to 100% of Medicare (like SB397 SD2), would not include ABA services.** This has resulted in a lack of parity for these intensive behavioral health services in our state.

Other payors in the state, including the Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Health (DOH) Development Disabilities Division (DDD) pay higher rates for these services, with a difference of \$25 per hour for DOE neighbor islands and \$19.45 for DOH-DDD respectively. TRICARE, currently reimburses \$15.56 more per hour for RBTs and as of May 1st will increase their rate to be \$25.12 more per hour.

Other states, with lower costs of living, have increased their reimbursement rates over the years while the QUEST reimbursement rates have remained the same. A sample of Medicaid state rates for RBTs is included in Table 1.

Funder	RBT rate per hour
Alaska Medicaid	\$76.08
Arizona Medicaid	\$81.48
Nevada Medicaid	\$52.04
Oregon Medicaid	\$55
Hawai'i Medicaid	\$50

Table 1. Medicaid rates in other states for comparison with links to state fee schedules.

Waitlist for services, limited provider network—QUEST beneficiaries are too often faced with a lack of access to services across the state, especially on neighbor islands. Providers report having to maintain waitlists, with families sometimes waiting for years to access their medically necessary behavioral health treatment. Research demonstrates that early intensive intervention and provision of services in line with the [professional standards of care](#) for treatment dosage produce the best gains for individuals and can decrease the costs of care over the lifetime.

Due to low reimbursement rates and the high cost of living here in the islands, there is a shortage of providers, creating provider network adequacy issues. An increase in reimbursement rates would allow providers to pay livable wages and create additional jobs to serve QUEST beneficiaries.

We urge you to pass these resolutions to address the urgent need for parity in payments for applied behavior analysis services for the Medicaid population. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Mahalo,



Kristen Koba-Burd, BCBA, LBA
Legislative Chair
Hawai'i Association for Behavior Analysis



Committee on Human Services

Thursday, April 13, 2023
9:15 a.m.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 329
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

SUPPORT SCR 132 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of SCR 132**. BAYADA is a not-for-profit health care company committed to serving our community. We provide services across the state, with behavioral health services for QUEST members on Oahu and Maui.

As a behavioral health service provider, we have struggled to meet the needs of children with autism on Med-QUEST due to the increased costs of operating a business without increased rates for our services. QUEST rates for the coverage of intensive behavioral therapy (IBT) for treatment of children under 21 years of age with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), also referred to as applied behavior analysis (ABA), were set in 2015 and have not increased, despite the increased costs of living and increased costs for employers over the last 8 years. Wages have gone up nearly 30% since 2015 in Hawai'i, forcing businesses to shoulder the cost without proportionate rate increases, making it harder to attract candidates and businesses to the field of supporting individuals with autism and their families.

- **Rate differences**—There is a significant disparity in reimbursement between Med-QUEST and other departments within the state who pay a higher rate for Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT), who are an integral part of providing applied behavior analysis (ABA) services. In the table below, publicly available rates in the state are included for comparison. **During the time we have submitted testimony on this issue during the current legislative session, TRICARE has increased their RBT rate making it \$25.12 per hour higher than current QUEST rates.** Additionally, these other funding sources allow for more service activities to be billed in comparison to QUEST, resulting in even lower reimbursement.

Funder	Current RBT rate per hour	Rate as of 5/1/23
TRICARE Hawai'i	\$65.56	\$75.12
DOH-DD Waiver	\$69.48	\$69.48
DOE for neighbor islands	\$75	\$75
MedQUEST	\$50	\$50

Table 1. Publicly available rates for the same service in Hawai'i.

- **Difficulty hiring and retaining providers**—as an organization, we have struggled to hire and retain providers to meet the needs of QUEST members and other clients in need of services. Often during the recruitment process, providers are asking for wages we are not able to provide



due to the current reimbursement rates. We're receiving more applications than ever, and offering more conditional offers, however we're seeing lower position acceptance or transition to hired.

- **Staffing differences:** for comparison, at our Maui location we have been able to hire double the amount of RBTs in the last year to work in the DOE (which has a higher reimbursement rate) than we have been able to hire for our QUEST and insurance-funded services.
- **Waitlist to access services**—currently we must maintain a waitlist for clients to access services because there is more demand than we are able to meet with our current providers. At our Oahu location, 40% of those on our waitlist are QUEST members. At our Maui location, 66% are QUEST members. We closed our Big Island and Kauai insurance-based services, despite ongoing community need, due to losses based on unsustainable rates in 2018. These waitlists are only representative of our organization and are similar across providers.
- **Access to care** — behavioral health services provided during critical early years can decrease the overall costs to the state by preventing children and families needing to remain reliant on state resources for care as they grow. Current waitlists and provider adequacy limitations, prevent access to access to behavioral healthcare that allows children to build needed skills and decrease symptoms that reduce the need for supports from DOE, DHS, and DOH-DDD as they age.
- **Career and Workforce Development**—with improved funding in behavioral health organizations such as ours, providers can increase access to jobs for our local community with livable wages in healthcare careers supporting QUEST members here in Hawai'i. With adequately funded and competitive reimbursement rates we believe we can improve member access to much needed services not only on Maui and Oahu, but to Big Island and Kauai as well.

We respectfully request the Committee pass this resolution in support of increasing rates for what we believe are under-covered behavioral health services.

Thank you,

Josliene Miller
BAYADA Behavioral Health

April 12, 2023

Re: SCR132

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES.

I write to you today on behalf of The Council of Autism Service Providers (CASP) in support of SCR132. CASP is a non-profit association of organizations committed to providing evidence-based care to individuals with autism. CASP represents the autism provider community to the nation at large, including government, payers, and the general public. We provide information and education and promote standards that enhance quality of care.

Of particular interest to our members is the coverage of evidence-based care in private health insurance plans and through Medicaid.

The State of Hawaii took an important step in 2015, when it passed legislation requiring coverage of medically necessary care for ASD. Since then, individuals diagnosed with ASD have had access to meaningful interventions, reducing their need for special education services, improving their quality of life, and opening doors for further education and employment.

This coverage includes children under the age of 21 who are enrolled in MedQUEST, assuring access to medically necessary care pursuant to Medicaid's Early Periodic, Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) mandate and CMS' Informational Bulletin on Clarification of Medicaid Coverage of Services to Children with Autism.¹

¹ Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services. Informationa Bulletin, Clarification of Medicaid Coverage of Services to Children with Autism, July 7, 2014 (hereinafter "CMS Informational Bulletin"), available at <http://www.medicare.gov/Federal-Policy-Guidance/Downloads/CIB-07-07-14.pdf>.

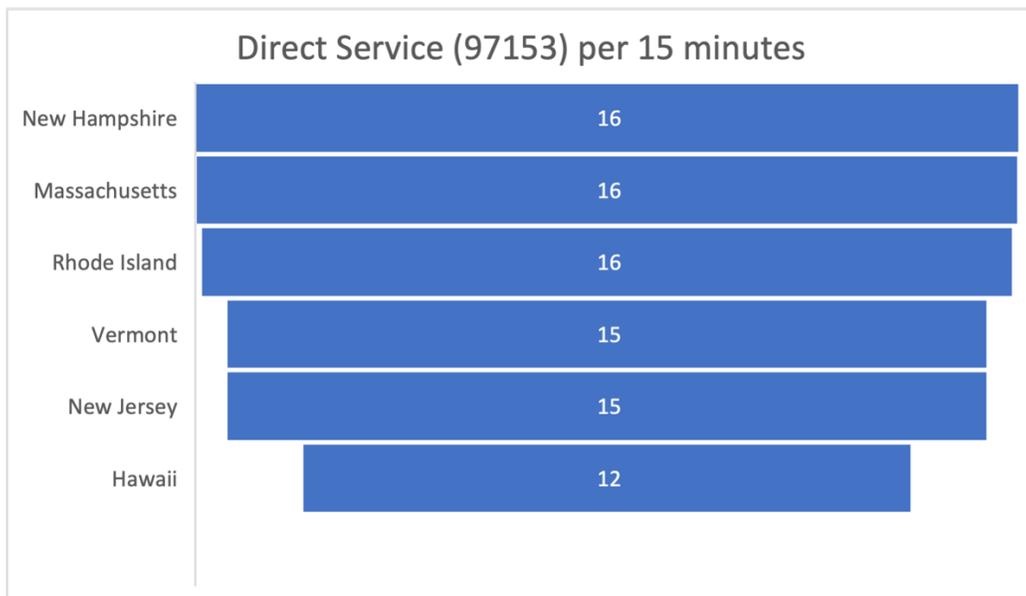
EPSDT requires that these services be provided **without delay**. The previously referenced CMS bulletin² states:

*EPSDT also requires medically necessary diagnostic and treatment services. When a screening examination indicates the need for further evaluation of a child's health, the child should be appropriately referred for diagnosis and treatment **without delay**. Ultimately, the goal of EPSDT is to assure that children get the health care they need, when they need it – the right care to the right child at the right time in the right setting.*

***The role of states is to make sure all covered services are available** as well as to assure that families of enrolled children, including children with ASD, are aware of and have access to a broad range of services to meet the individual child's needs.*

Ensuring an adequate network is established by offering appropriate rates is critical. The existing MedQUEST rates have not been adjusted since 2015, even though the cost of providing these services has skyrocketed. This has caused our member organizations to maintain wait lists for children who are in dire need of services and is in direct contradiction to the requirements of EPSDT.

Additionally, as indicated below, other states with similar costs of living have rates that are more in line with economic forces:



² Ibid.

According to the most recent estimates from the Centers for Disease Control, 1 in every 36 children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. This means that 2% of Hawaii's children who are on Medicaid have an autism spectrum disorder, and to date, many are unable to access the most basic, evidence-based treatments for their diagnosis. Because of this, we respectfully request that you pass SCR132, which ensures that necessary steps are taken to establish adequate rates for autism service providers.

Thank you for your work in the past and moving forward to ensure that Hawaii's autistic children who are enrolled in Medicaid have access to life-changing, evidence-based care.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judith Ursitti". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judith Ursitti
Vice President of Government Affairs

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 9:54:56 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josliene Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support rate increases for ABA services. As a provider, I have seen the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified providers and fully support efforts to increase the Medicaid rates for ABA. Furthermore, rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state. Please highly consider.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 9:56:15 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tori Sims	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 9:56:41 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristina Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a provider, I have seen the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified providers and fully support efforts to increase the Medicaid rates for ABA.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 10:05:38 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristian Guynes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support rate increases for ABA services. Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 10:08:06 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dallas Star	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Support SCR 132

Rates for ABA providers under Med-Quest have remained stagnant since 2015. Since their adoption almost 10 years ago, other state and federal agencies have increased rates for these services including DD Waiver, HIDEOE, and Tricare. Our need for qualified professionals in Hawaii continues to grow as the CDC has announced that now 1 in 36 children are diagnosed with autism and many will need access to ABA services early in their developmental years to be able to live independent lives. This measure is a cost saving step for the state to reduce the burden as these individuals age and become more reliant on state and local resources if not addressed.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 11:43:22 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Walters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 1:04:04 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Krekel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- I support rate increases for ABA services. Despite increased costs of living, rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015. We need rate increases to meet the needs of ALL children with autism in our state.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 1:44:35 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Siyuan Wang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a provider, I have seen the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified providers and fully support efforts to increase the Medicaid rates for ABA.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 1:51:21 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deanna Welsh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- I support rate increases for ABA services. Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 2:39:45 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaitlin Preciado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 4:22:19 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Ho'ohuli	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SCR132. As a provider, I have seen the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified providers and fully support efforts to increase the Medicaid rates for ABA.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 5:01:14 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mia Onorato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

DATE: 03/21/23

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES.

I support bill SCR 132 which aim to ensure that Med Quest provider rates are raised for Applied Behavior Analysis Services.

Aloha,

Mia Onorato

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 5:24:58 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Koenig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 7:25:17 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Bolgren	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support rate increases for ABA services.

As a provider, I have seen the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified providers and fully support efforts to increase the Medicaid rates for ABA.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 8:36:02 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehaulani Dickerson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support rate increases for ABA services.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 9:35:01 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Crystal S. Farmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the rate increase for ABA services in the state of Hawaii. I am a provider. I know first hand at the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified providers. I completely support the efforts to increase the Medicaid rates for ABA services. The rates for ABA services have not changed since 2015. There has been a steep increase in the cost of living and with the revolving door of military spouses and families that increase the strain on providing appropriate ABA services. There desperately needs to be a rate increase to provide and protect the needs of children and families that have been impacted in our state.

Thanks

Crystal S. Farmer



4/11/23

Re: SCR132- REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' MED-QUEST DIVISION TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PROVIDER RATES ARE ESTABLISHED FOR APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS SERVICES.

I support bill SCR132 which aims to ensure that Med Quest provider rates are raised for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Services.

I was born and raised in Hawai'i and have been fortunate to work implementing ABA procedures since 2008. ABA is the science of behavior. As practitioners of ABA we aim to understand an individual's behavior to the very best of our abilities, create contexts that enrich and enhance learning and cooperation, and teach skills that will help individuals be as independent as they possibly can.

Developing a meaningful, productive, and successful ABA program requires a significant amount of training and oversight. Consistent and ongoing staff training and development, direct training and supervision of front-line staff while working with a learner, ongoing monitoring and oversight of the individualized program, and training of stakeholders are all HUGELY important requirements that are necessary for ideal outcomes.

As you are aware, the costs associated with running a business during the pandemic have been astronomical. The unexpected expenses of PPE, cleaning supplies, additional training, and other safety considerations are costs that directly impact how much we can pay our staff. To recruit and retain top talent and to mentor staff to develop skills that will truly address our consumers' individual needs, it is critical that the rates are raised.

We are in this field to make a difference. Please support the efforts to allow us to continue to create an environment where our consumers can be heard, seen, and ultimately flourish.

Aloha,

Sara Sato, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA
PhD Candidate
Clinical Director
Behavior Analysis No Ka Oi, Inc.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 10:42:30 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support rate increases for ABA services. As a provider in the state, I have seen the challenges with recruiting and retaining competent providers without increasing pay.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 11:13:19 PM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsea Gornichec	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- I support rate increases for ABA services.
 - As a provider, I have seen the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified providers and fully support efforts to increase the Medicaid rates for ABA.
 - Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 1:46:15 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

as a provider I have seen the struggles with hiring and training new staff. Turnover rates for direct ABA staff is a significant issue and impacts service delivery, availability, and quality. If we increase rates we can afford to pay more appropriate direct service rates matching the cost of living in hawaii. Increasing rates would potentially impact the quality and availability of service delivery.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 6:11:32 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Torres	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a provider, I have seen the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified providers and fully support efforts to increase the Medicaid rates for ABA.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 7:06:25 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Hankins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a provider, I have seen the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified providers and fully support efforts to increase the Medicaid rates for ABA. Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 7:28:06 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the rate increases for ABA services as the current rates have not been increased since 2015.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 8:42:15 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jemar Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support rate increases for ABA services.

As a provider, I have seen the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified providers and fully support efforts to increase the Medicaid rates for ABA.

Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 8:58:16 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Fredeluces	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a provider, I have seen the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified providers and fully support efforts to increase the Medicaid rates for ABA. The retention staff is key to providing adequate services and is essential to providing quality services that do make changes in the lives of our clients, retention leads to consistency and consistency is the biggest factor that affects services.

Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015, despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to meet the needs of children with autism in our state. I have seen a continuous revolving door of ABA providers and the biggest reason is the pay doesn't support cost of living in Hawaii. Providers love to work with our ABA kiddos but can't live on the pay and pay is tied into directly with the billing rates.

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 8:59:56 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason J Stauffer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear members of the committee,

I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) responsible for providing and supervising behavioral health services here in Hawaii. I can truthfully report to you that the families I'm supporting currently receive 10% or less of the service hours recommended in their child's treatment plan as necessary for teaching crucial social, communication and adaptive skills. It cannot be denied that the current low rates for Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) services, which have not been increased since 2015 and which are out-of-line with rates offered by other states, contribute significantly to this deperate condition; and that increasing our rates in Hawaii as recommended in SCR132 is a necessary step in remedying this situation for the benefit of our children and families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jason Stauffer, MS, BCBA

SCR-132

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 9:08:45 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Kuhn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This letter is in support of ensuring adequate network capacity and increasing rates for service provision to the population of children and adults impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Our agency has been demonstrating difficulty in maintaining adequate staffing numbers due to increased cost of living in the state of Hawaii while rates of reimbursement have not shown an equivalent increase, and as such 19% of our staff have relocated to mainland offices, to ensure the ability to maintain a basic standard of living. Those staff have not been able to be replaced in Hawaii, due to inability to offer higher pay scales for our Medicaid clients. Many entry-level staff (RBT) are refusing work in the field outside of DOE based services, which pay at a significantly higher rate. This has directly impacted our ability to serve families located in the State of Hawaii, and has reduced the number of participants we are able to support.

The existing MedQUEST rates have not shown an adjustment since 2015, even as the cost of living in the state and the cost of providing services to these families has increased exponentially. This has caused our agency to implement wait lists for children and families who are in high need of support, which explicitly contradicts the requirements of EPSDT.

Due to these issues, our business has had to decrease its current available treatment openings for individuals in the state of Hawaii, and transition to states such as Utah, Colorado and Wyoming, which offer a more sustainable “rate vs cost of living” fee schedule.

As such, this letter is in support of review and increase of the current state of Hawaii MedQUEST rates for ABA services.

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Submitted on: 4/13/2023 3:07:04 AM

Testimony for HUS on 4/13/2023 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen McLeod	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support rate increases for ABA services.

Rates for ABA services have remained the same since coverage started in 2015 despite increased costs of living. We need rate increases to hire and maintain staff to meet the needs of children with autism in our state.