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Announcing medical policy change related to autism treatment services



NEWS

What you need to know

We're retroactively updating our medical policy to remove age limits for covered autism treatment services, including applied behavioral analysis, or ABA, effective Jan. 1, 2022. Certificates and benefit documents are being updated for the 2023 plan year.

Previously, following state of Michigan legal guidelines, children aged out of certain autism spectrum disorder services when they turned 19. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan is working to update our benefits to allow members age 19 and older to receive these autism spectrum disorder services to the extent that those services are medically necessary.

ABA therapy

While our age limits match those that were mandated by Michigan law, the rationale behind the age limit was based on medical necessity. Because recent medical evidence indicates age limits are no longer an appropriate method for determining whether ABA therapy is medically necessary, we removed the age limitation, effective Jan. 1, 2022.

This change is consistent with recent guidance from the Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services and the federal government.

Members who would have aged out of autism spectrum disorder services, such as ABA therapy, in 2022 will remain eligible to continue treatment. However, as with any benefit, autism spectrum disorder services will be covered only as long as they're medically necessary.

Action item

Familiarize yourself with this current information so you can answer questions you may receive from clients about this policy change.

Groups can't opt out because this is a medical policy change.

Time frame

We're working diligently to have certificate and benefit document changes in place by Jan. 1, 2023.

Benefits are being updated retroactively to Jan. 1, 2022, to ensure continued access for members to ABA services.

Questions? Contact your Blue Cross sales representative or general agent.