



*The Voice of Behavior Analysis in Connecticut*

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March 16, 2014

Testimony of Solandy Forte, LCSW, BCBA, President of the Connecticut Association for Behavior Analysis and Legislative Committee Member

**In Support of Sections 1 & 2 of HB 5558, AN ACT CONCERNING SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER**

Public Health Committee, Wednesday, March 19, 2014 Public Hearing

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee,

The Connecticut Association for Behavior Analysis (CTABA) is a professional organization that seeks to assist in the development and advancement of the field of behavior analysis within the state of Connecticut through research, education, and dissemination of information. CTABA represents Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) in Connecticut, with a current membership of over 400 persons certified by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) and is an affiliated chapter of the Association of Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) and the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts (APBA). CTABA is honored to represent the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA) in Connecticut.

This testimony is in support of HB 5888 Section 1 & 2, raised before the Public Health Committee to expand the services available to individuals with autism spectrum disorders who receive Medicaid Waiver.

Behavior Analysts provide services across a variety of settings including but not limited to home-based services with intact, biological families (i.e., CT Birth to Three, DCF voluntary services, and private insurance waiver), in foster homes, in group homes, in acute-residential settings, and in school systems. Often times, individuals with autism are not able to access Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services by qualified individuals due to the limitations of the State's Medicaid waiver program, HUSKY Health.

It is imperative that all persons with autism have access to and receive the necessary treatment to improve their quality of life by teaching the skills necessary to become active members of their community. Applied Behavior Analysis is a treatment option that has been proven to be successful with persons with ASD. Since the ground-breaking research of Ivar Lovaas published in 1987, Applied Behavior Analysis has become synonymous with providing effective evidenced-based treatment to individuals with autism spectrum disorder. Applied Behavior Analysis is now the nationally recognized leading treatment for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and

has been validated by hundreds of peer reviewed journal articles. Behavior analysis has also been recognized by a variety of regulatory bodies and well-respected individuals (The National Research Council, 2001<sup>1</sup>, The Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities, 2000<sup>2</sup>, The New York State Department of Health – Clinical Practice Guidelines, 1999<sup>3</sup>, The U.S. Surgeon General’s Report, 1995<sup>4</sup>.)

The most widely recognized service delivery professional providing Applied Behavior Analysis services to families affected by autism spectrum disorders are the Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA). A BCBA develops treatment programs for every client, trains and supervises ABA non-certified support staff, provides direct services to the client, regularly reviews treatment data, and works with families to support the generalization of treatment across people and settings.

Further, I support the expansion of the hospital and group home system to include autism specific facilities. Traditionally, these types of program do not provide Applied Behavior Analysis services as part of milieu therapy. The inclusion of a BCBA on staff in these facilities is imperative to the treatment of a child with autism. ABA is a widely-known, evidence-based treatment for autism, in both skill acquisition and behavior reductions programs as mentioned above.

Sincerely,

*Solandy Forte, LCSW, BCBA*

Solandy Forte, LCSW, BCBA  
CTABA President  
Legislative Committee Member

On behalf of the CTABA Executive Council & Legislative Committee