



UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

The Honorable William M. "Mac" Thornberry
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

AUG 31 2016

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter is in response to the Senate Report 114-255, page 205, accompanying S. 2943, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, which requests the Department of Defense (DoD) to provide a quarterly report on effectiveness of the Autism Care Demonstration (ACD). The ACD offers comprehensive Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services for all TRICARE-eligible beneficiaries diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. ABA services are not limited by the beneficiary's age, dollar amount spent, or number of services provided. As of May 30, 2016, there are approximately 13,500 beneficiaries participating in the ACD.

Specifically, the committee requests the Secretary to report, at a minimum, the following information by state: (1) the number of new referrals for services under the program; (2) the number of total beneficiaries enrolled in the program; (3) the average wait-time from time of referral to the first appointment for services under the program; (4) the number of providers accepting new patients under the program; (5) the number of providers who no longer accept new patients for services under the program; (6) the average number of treatment sessions required by beneficiaries; and, (7) the health-related outcomes for beneficiaries under the program." The information is not currently tracked nor is participant information tracked by state. We have directed our managed care support contractors to begin tracking this information effective July 1, 2016, and to report results quarterly. We expect to provide this information in October 2016 and quarterly thereafter.

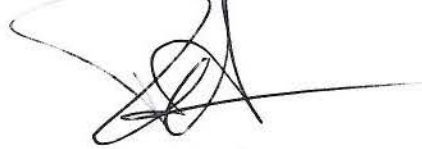
Based on contract data reports provided to us by our contractors on a routine basis, there are 13,802 (3,325 North Region, 4,390 South Region, and 6,087 West Region) beneficiaries participating in the ACD as of June 30, 2016. There are 8,056 Board Certified Behavior Analysts (2,252 North Region, 3,533 South Region, and 2,271 West Region), 607 Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts (154 North Region, 290 South Region, and 163 West Region), and 20,011 Behavior Technicians (6,253 North Region, 3,188 South Region, and 10,570 West Region) as of June 30, 2016. The total number of beneficiaries who have an approved referral and authorization and are without an ABA provider is 236, or 1.7 percent of the total participating beneficiaries.

The DoD fully supports continued research on the nature and effectiveness of ABA services and the evolution of the field from an educational discipline toward a health care discipline. In regard to item 7 above, the ACD does not currently include evaluation of health-related outcomes as the policy does not require norm-reference, valid, and reliable

assessment tools administered and submitted by a doctoral-level clinical psychologist, developmental-behavioral pediatrician, or neurodevelopmental pediatrician, trained in the administration of such measures. Therefore, the DoD intends to modify the current ACD policy to include assessment tools for ACD participants and will conduct record audits and assess and report results accordingly.

A similar letter is being sent to the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Thank you for your interest in the health and well-being of our Service members, veterans, and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Peter Levine", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter Levine
Acting

cc:
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member



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READINESS

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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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Specifically, the committee requests the Secretary to report, at a minimum, the following information by state: (1) the number of new referrals for services under the program; (2) the number of total beneficiaries enrolled in the program; (3) the average wait-time from time of referral to the first appointment for services under the program; (4) the number of providers accepting new patients under the program; (5) the number of providers who no longer accept new patients for services under the program; (6) the average number of treatment sessions required by beneficiaries; and, (7) the health-related outcomes for beneficiaries under the program." The information is not currently tracked nor is participant information tracked by state. We have directed our managed care support contractors to begin tracking this information effective July 1, 2016, and to report results quarterly. We expect to provide this information in October 2016 and quarterly thereafter.

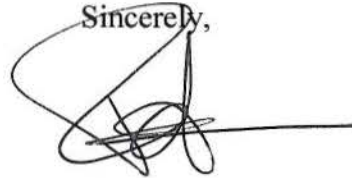
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Peter Levine
Acting

cc:
The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member