



## Testimony on HB 153 to the Ohio Senate Finance Committee

**Oppose Medicaid Cost Containment and Utilization Limits proposed by The Ohio Department of Mental Health for CPST (community psychiatric services and treatment) – is also a named service in Medicaid (see OAC 5122-29-17). It is a rehabilitative service intended to maximize the reduction of symptoms of mental illness in order to restore the individual's functioning to the highest level possible. It is comprised of individualized mental health activities which are delivered in a variety of locations based upon the natural environment of a client, such as home and community locations. Proposed limit in which prior authorization would be required to continue service: 104 hours/year.**

**May 18, 2011**

Chairman Widener, Ranking Member Skindell, and members of the committee. My name is Marla Root; I am the Director of Community Affairs and Advocacy for Step By Step Academy. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB 153 Oppose Medicaid Cost Containment and Utilization Limits proposed by The Ohio Department of Mental Health for CPST. Please know that we are very supportive of the efforts by the General Assembly and administration to re-design government and proposals to modernize, integrate, and improve coordination as we finding cost savings to fix our states budget.

Step By Step Academy is a nationally accredited community rehabilitation facility and a certified community mental health center by the Ohio Department of Mental Health providing CPST services to 170 consumers from fourteen different counties with each consumer accessing anywhere from 2 hours to 35 hours per week. Our consumers have been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and have intensive behavioral needs. Per the DSM-IV, which is the manual published by the American Psychiatric Association and covers all mental health disorders for both children and adults, ASD's are categorized as an Axis I mental health diagnosis. Other mental health disorders that are Axis I include depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, OCD, anxiety, and multi-personality disorders.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is endorsed by the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Research Council and the U.S. Surgeon General due to its efficacy in treatment. Our evidence based CPST treatments outcomes tell the story why our parent satisfactions rates have never below 4.6 out of a 5 point rating scale and why we receive referrals from across the state from leading clinical behavioral professionals in the field of autism spectrum disorders. Below shows the effectiveness:

- 21 children who have been at attending Step By Step Academy and receiving intensive intervention were given an IQ test recently.
  - The IQ scores of the 21 children who were re-tested have increased an average of 11.7 points.
  - One child gained 58 points, another gained 50 points and another child gained 34 points.
  - On a communication assessment, 19 children were re-tested and found to have gained an average of 3.7 points.
- Percentage of children gaining this skill since starting at treatment:
  - 82% Successful toilet training with consumers > 8 years old
  - 96% Decrease in problem behavior
  - 75% Since coming to SBSA have functional communication (had zero prior to coming here)
  - 77% Independent dressing skills
  - 75% Reliably communicating basic needs/wants
  - 72% Feeding self
- Two children no longer require residential placements after receiving ongoing intensive behavioral services through CPST. The cost savings to the state is probably near \$170,000 per year.

According to a cost benefit analysis done by Jacobson, Mulick and Green (1996) that has been adjusted for inflation, the lifetime cost or contribution for individuals for ages 3-55 years are as follows:

- A non-Disabled Individual will earn an average of **\$1,597,049** in his/her lifetime.
- An individual with autism who gains maximum benefit from early, intensive intervention services will earn an average of **\$1,475,791** in his/her lifetime.
- An individual with autism who gains partial benefit from early, intensive intervention services costs the public support systems an average of **\$3,368,469** in his/her lifetime.
- An individual with autism who gains minimal benefit from early, intensive intervention or has no access to early, intensive intervention services costs the public support system **\$4,404,482** in his/her lifetime.

**Our families need your help.** Our consumers receive CPST services that treat their intensive behavioral needs as a result of their autism diagnosis. **Our consumers are not in the 96% of CPST consumers that ODMH states will be able to get CPST services under the new utilization limits.**

**Our consumers are in the 4% of CPST consumers that receive more than 2 hours of CPST services per week and under the proposed utilization limits will be subject to a prior authorization process to receive more than 2 hours per week.** It is our understanding from mental health and many providers across the state that the individuals who represented the 4% are:

- Children with severe mental illness and intensive behavioral disorders
- Children that may need a residential placement if proper treatment is not provided that will help them to stay in their homes with their families.
- Children whose direct care staff has to wear protective arm gear or helmets to keep the staff safe.

**Why are the most afflicted having CPST services capped when the alternative is much more expensive placement? Why are the 4% bearing the weight of the cost containment.**

- Step By Step and Nationwide Children's Autism Center proposed to the mental health about reducing the rate paid for CPST across the board and not after 90 minutes.
- Both organizations felt they had answers to help the department bring other funding mechanism to reduce the budget burden to mental health.

**In fiscal year 2010 Step By Step Academy represented only 3.43% of the entire number of statewide units billed for CPST.**

I have been asking questions to ODMH on behalf of the families we serve and we have not been provided any answers. The Department of Mental Health intends to contract with a vendor to create and manage a new prior authorization system to approve or deny requests from provider agencies who request to provide two types of Medicaid behavioral health services to children beyond their allotted annual limits: partial hospitalization and CPST. **We have asked about specifics of the prior authorization process to better understand the deeming of a MH service to be a medical necessity and to know if we provide the treatment recommendations of the state licensed professional.**

- Will autism be a diagnosis recognized as a mental health disorder and will individuals with autism have access to CPST services?
- Will individuals diagnosed with an ASD have access to the 104 hours of CPST beginning July 1, 2011?
- Since individuals with ASD meet medical necessity for more than 104 hours today, will they be approved following the preauthorization process for the recommended number of hours as determined by the state licensed professional for hours on and above the 104 hours?

Thank you to the Senate Finance Committee for allowing me to testify today. I would welcome you to come tour our center and learn more about our great treatment outcomes. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Marla Root  
Director, Community Affairs & Advocacy  
Step By Step Academy  
[mroot@stepbystepacademy.org](mailto:mroot@stepbystepacademy.org)  
614-565-5765

