

Alyssa Johns, parent(s) of a child with autism

332 Pennsylvania Ave McDonald OH 44437 (full address including zip code)

Senate Medicaid Committee & My District's Legislators
Testimony on HB 96 (SFY 2026-27 State of Ohio Operating Budget)
May 15, 2025

Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Medicaid Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony today.

My name is Alyssa Johns and I am the parent of a 6-year-old child named Paul Osso with autism. I am writing to ask you to support and submit the Ohio Autism Insurance Coalition's state budget amendments to fix access challenges for autism therapies in Medicaid and employer-based health plans to the Legislative Service Commission

Current data shows that only 8% of Medicaid-eligible children with autism are getting access to the most prescribed evidence-based treatment for autism, called applied behavior analysis or ABA Therapy. We also see access issues in some Ohio-regulated employer-based health plans that still have age, hours, and visit caps that limit access to ABA therapy.

My own family has faced challenges in accessing behavioral health care for our child with autism as well. We experienced the following challenges, which I have checked below:

Challenges with <u>Medicaid Insurance</u>	Challenges with <u>Employer-Based Insurance, Marketplace ACA, or Individual Plan</u>
Could not find a provider. <input type="checkbox"/>	Could not find a provider. <input type="checkbox"/>
Waited on a long waitlist to start services. <input type="checkbox"/>	Waited on a long waitlist to start services. <input type="checkbox"/>
Never got access to ABA or speech services. <input type="checkbox"/>	Never got access to ABA or speech services. <input type="checkbox"/>
We did not have a managed care plan and could not figure out how to access therapies. <input type="checkbox"/>	Was denied some therapy services for my child due to caps on age, hours, or visits for autism services. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Our managed care plan denied some of our therapy hours due to age, hours, or visit caps. <input type="checkbox"/>	Paid out of pocket for therapy services that my child needed due to being over caps. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Had no coverage for ABA or speech services at the time we needed it. <input type="checkbox"/>	Have no coverage for ABA or speech services. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

We can't wait; Medicaid coverage for ABA therapy coverage is unstable, and some employer-based health plans have caps, all leading to many children with autism not getting the treatment they were prescribed and need.

We need your support for the Ohio Autism Insurance Coalition's amendments to stabilize the ABA therapy coverage within Medicaid and employer-based health plans. Please reach out to Marla Root at the Ohio Autism Insurance Coalition for Amendment Language that we would like you to submit to the Legislative Services Commission. Here is Marla's contact information: P: 614-565-5765 E: Help@ASDOHIO.com

Thank you for allowing me to share our family's challenges and concerns about accessing behavioral health care for treating autism spectrum disorder. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

My contact information: P: 330-979-1111 E: aj@wfboom.com