Important Milestones in DoD Provision of ABA to Military Children (2001-2015)

2001 — Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy added as a benefit under Program for Persons with Disabilities (PFPWD).

2002 — Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) created in 2002 NDAA

1 Sept 2005 — ECHO put into policy

28 Jan 2008 — NDAA signed into law, implementing Sec 587, Education and Treatment for Military Dependent Children with Autism

13 Mar 2008 — DoD Enhanced Access to Autism Services Demonstration starts. Expanded providers to include "tutors"

26 Mar 2012 — In a Florida Medicaid case, a federal judge finds ABA is medically necessary to treat children with autism

19 Apr 2012 — Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announces it will make ABA coverage available as part of its basic medical benefit for federal employees

26 Jul 2012 — Federal judge in Berge case finds, DHA must provide ABA to Basic Program Beneficiaries and not just ECHO beneficiares

27 Jul 2012 — New TRICARE policy manual issued, removing ABA coverage for military children without an autism diagnosis (such as Downs Syndrome or Cerebral Palsy), with 14 days notice and no assistance to find alternative therapy.

2 Jan 2013 — 2013 NDAA passed into law: Congress creates a one-year TRICARE ABA Pilot Program (Sec 705)

14 Jun 2014 — TRICARE Announces all ABA will be provided under one demonstration project

8 Oct 2014 — 5:48 pm: Pentagon to cut autism healthcare payments in half

8 Oct 2014 — 7:15 pm: Pentagon to delay autism spending cuts

3 Dec 2014 — Autism Roundtable held at Pentagon with Providers

29 May 2015 — Federal Register notice of new provisions regarding cost shares and reimbursement rates for ABA

Important Milestones in DoD Provision of ABA to Military Children (2016-Present)

29 Sept 2016

New changes to Autism Care Demonstration

30 Nov 2016

Military developmental pediatricians push back against changes

5 May 2017

DHA officially rescinded the diagnostic and IQ testing requirements for the Autism Care Demonstration.

Mar 2021

DHA announces significant changes to Autism Care Demonstration, to be implemented in May of 2021.

Mar 2021

Dr. Ira Cohen (Primary author of the PDDBI) Podcast: 'DHA is cooking the books'

27 Dec 2021

2022 NDAA Sec 738, directs the Secretary of Defense to enter into an agreement, to conduct an independent assessment of DoD's Autism Care Demonstration project.

22 Oct 2021

PAR, the publisher of the Parenting Stress Index TRICARE uses, writes a letter stating, *"Such data and information, in the hands of untrained professionals, is not useful or relevant"*

13 Sept 2021

Dr. Cohen concludes the "DHA reports to Congress reflected a lack of understanding of the PDDBI, and that selective elimination of a large portion of cases led to biased data and data analyses"

Mar 2021

Autism Speaks urges Department of Defense to expand, not restrict, services for military children

Why is this Important?

Support for the most vulnerable military family members cannot be overlooked. Military readiness and retention is negatively impacted when the service member's family lacks proper coverage. With 1 in 44 children being diagnosed with autism, this is a need that will continue and have a noticeable impact on our military forces for the foreseeable future.

For a more information on the events in this timeline or for a copy of the detailed version of this timeline, please e-mail us at autism@exceptionalmilitaryfam.com or visit our website.