

Transforming ABA: Improve care and lower costs through clinical alignment

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is a research-based and proven therapy for individuals with autism and other developmental disorders. It is an essential service that helps increase positive behaviors and improve social interactions.

THE PROBLEM

ABA is an **intensive and expensive therapy** due to its comprehensive nature and the support services required. While it is evidence-based, there are no universally enforced national standards — which can lead to inconsistent care quality and outcomes. ABA yields positive results when correctly implemented, but quality often falls short, and 40 hours of weekly therapy may not always produce the best clinical outcomes. This has driven **rapid cost growth for health plans** — a 20% year-over-year increase — and often worsens or stagnates member outcomes.

**1-2+ MILLION
DOLLARS**

Lifetime
costs of ABA
per member

**35 BILLION
DOLLARS**

Spent annually
by health plans on
ABA services

15%

Average annual
growth in ABA
spending by
health plans

**That's where
we come in.**

Onos Health is an automated
monitoring platform to ensure
every dollar spent on ABA
goes towards delivering
high-quality care.

(2024) Indiana Made at Least \$56 Million in Improper Fee-for-Service Medicaid Payments for Applied Behavior Analysis Provided to Children Diagnosed With Autism. rep. Available at: <https://oig.hhs.gov/documents/audit/10123/A-09-22-02002.pdf> (Accessed: 2025).

L.E.K. Consulting. (2025). Investing in autism therapy: Key trends shaping the U.S. ABA therapy sector. Retrieved August 13, 2025, from <https://www.lek.com/insights/hea/us/so/investing-autism-therapy-key-trends-shaping-us-aba-therapy-sector>

Regaining Control Without Sacrificing Care

When a regional Medicaid payer expanded its ABA services, the intent was clear: give more families access to a proven therapy for autism and developmental conditions.

But within months, the costs—and complexities—began to mount. The payer aimed to ensure members received high-quality, cost-effective care, but their tools and systems fell short. The administrative workload became intense, with teams overwhelmed by prior authorizations and clinical reviews.

While children were often requesting up to **40 hours of therapy per week**, the plan had limited insight into whether the care was appropriate, effective, or even aligned with clinical standards.

That's where Onos Health stepped in.

Using our HIPAA-compliant behavioral health monitoring platform, the plan could finally see across its entire ABA population. The platform translated clinical standards and plan policies into real-time, automated oversight—flagging when care plans exceeded evidence-based thresholds or when sessions were documented without meaningful progress.

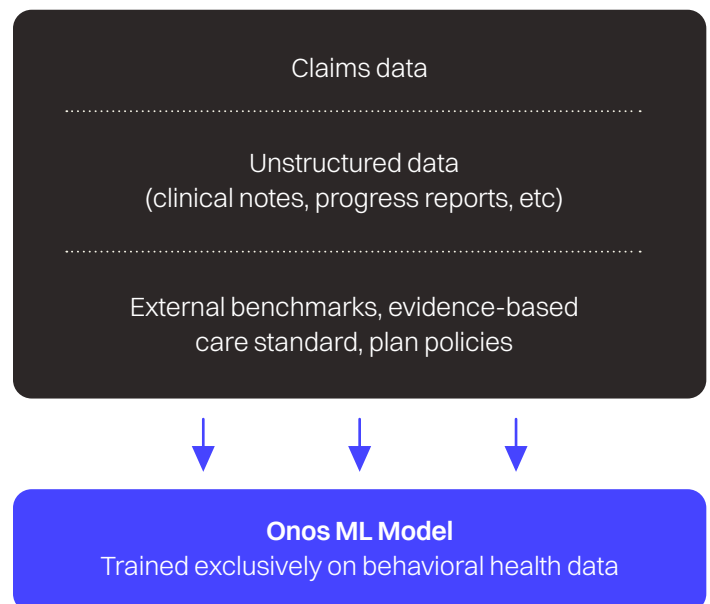
Onos also enabled **early intervention**, allowing the plan to work directly with providers to adjust care before patients veered too far off course. And because the insights were grounded in data, those conversations felt collaborative rather than adversarial. This ensures that this highly intensive service is monitored effectively, and when something goes off track, **payers can quickly get a care back on track**.

For example, when a provider submits a required six-month progress report for a child in ABA therapy, Onos automatically reviews the documentation to extract key

benchmarks and observations. These are compared to the clinical standards. If progress appears off track, the platform flags appropriate next steps to the provider—whether that means adjusting therapy hours, increasing caregiver involvement, or tightening data collection protocols. By automating what was a manual and tedious process, Onos enables health plans to apply this level of oversight across their entire ABA population, improving care quality while reducing administrative burden.

THE ONOS IMPACT IN ONE QUARTER

- Lowered total ABA clinical costs by 4-5% by lowering waste & abuse detection
- Reduced manual chart reviews and administrative workload by **nearly 50%**
- **Shifted spend** toward effective, evidence-aligned treatment
- Recovered trust with providers by engaging collaboratively, **doubling their response rate**



This case study is a fictional example, informed by real client challenges and representative use cases of the Onos platform.

The Measurable Impact of Onos

**1.8X IMPROVED
PROVIDER
RESPONSE RATE**

from providers
to payers when
using Onos

**40-50%
IMPROVEMENT
IN EFFICIENCY**

Reported by behavioral
health clinical and
admin teams

**4-5%
REDUCTION OF ABA
CLINICAL SPEND**

By detecting
actionable waste
and streamlining
intervention

With Onos, health plans can scale complex, personalized services like ABA while maintaining high-quality, appropriate care.