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I started serving families on the mid-shore (Talbot, Queen Anne, Dorchester and Caroline Counties) with the Maryland Coalition of Families on August 1, 2018, when I made my first referral for an adolescent in desperate need of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy (ABA therapy is for youth with autism spectrum disorders, usually co-occurring with behavioral health disorders). We began the process with the ONLY provider taking Medicaid on the shore at the time. They scheduled an intake, which took a month or more and several visits. After that, not a single visit was ever scheduled. The actual therapy NEVER began, despite calls from myself, the Targeted Case Management case managers, and a mom who really could self-advocate. This was the first family, but certainly not the last. In fact, this has been my experience every time.

Since then, I have made over 20 referrals to this provider as the ONLY Medicaid provider serving the Shore. I have never been able to have a single family get anywhere for service, and I have filed complaints with Medicaid and the Governor's office to press the importance. I serve a 50+ family caseload, and in over two years, that impact has been devastating for these families. Lack of ABA intervention has resulted in ER visits, short term inpatient stays for mental health, and a child's return from an adoptive home back into foster care due to their behaviors.

Additionally, I had several private insurance families who also desperately needed ABA therapy. Referring to this provider, even with private insurance, was a dead end. Once tons of time and paperwork were completed, nothing happened. My private insurance families are FRUSTRATED.

Recently I found a new ABA provider for the mid-shore that advertised that they accepted Medicaid and most private insurance. I called their service line, and had a lengthy discussion about the dire need, the specific locations of families needing a provider, and their staffing. Since then, I have made 15 referrals. The provider has not responded to a single request. Likewise, they don't respond to me now - rather, they take my number and don't call me back.

I have served families in this field for 14 years. I know, understand, and value the importance of ABA services for children with autism spectrum disorders and behavioral health disorders. It is a crime against the children on the Shore, desperate for help, that we cannot find an available provider.

Thanks so much for listening!