

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 20, 2013

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-1000

Dear Secretary Panetta,

As you know, the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requires TRICARE to implement a pilot program improving coverage and delivery of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) under the TRICARE basic program for all eligible beneficiaries with an autism spectrum disorder. The law requires the pilot program to be implemented within 90 days.

As you are aware, despite the final language within the 2013 NDAA conference report, the House and Senate did approve in bipartisan votes amendments to permanently cover behavioral health treatment, including ABA, under TRICARE basic. In addition, we continue to believe that the Department could and should use its administrative authority to make this change.

Nonetheless, as sponsors and supporters of the Caring for Military Kids With Autism Act and the amendments that passed, we are committed to ensuring the success of the pilot program and to ensuring appropriate coverage and access to ABA treatment. To achieve this however, we believe that it is incumbent on the Department to also do everything it can to make sure that families are receiving the treatment they deserve.

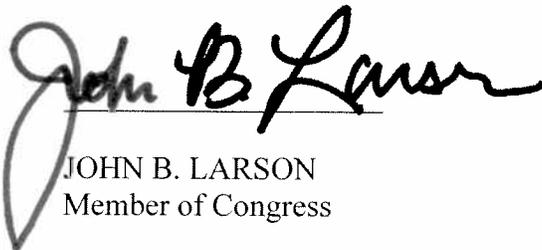
This begins with transparency in the process of developing the program. We believe that in addition to notifying members of Congress, TRICARE must communicate and collaborate with military families during the process of developing the pilot program. Engaging with these families as well as independent subject matter experts outside of the Department of Defense will help provide vital insight for the Department in ensuring that children are receiving the highest level of care. In providing this care, we also believe that TRICARE policies should be consistent with best practices. This includes models that cover technicians and Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts, to help make certain that there is sufficient access to care.

Finally, we urge and expect you to implement this pilot program promptly and without delay. These families have sacrificed tremendously for this country and the children of our men and women in uniform deserve full access to the treatment they require. We know that you are

committed to providing high quality care for our military families and we hope to work as partners in this effort.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. Given the short time frame before implementation is required, we look forward to hearing back from you shortly.

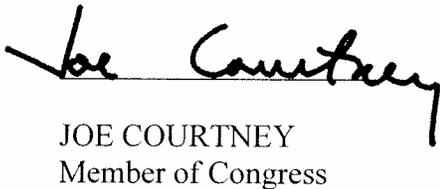
Sincerely,



JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress



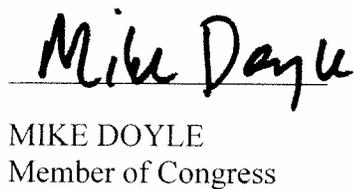
WALTER JONES
Member of Congress



JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress



TOM ROONEY
Member of Congress



MIKE DOYLE
Member of Congress

cc: Dr. Jonathan Woodson, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs
Director, TRICARE Management Activity