



Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Provider Accreditation Update: Implementation Timeline & Next Steps for Providers

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Summer 2026

Overview of Implementation Updates

Overview

MassHealth remains committed to **ensuring members have access to high-quality Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)** services.

Since announcing the accreditation requirement in **October 2024**, MassHealth has continued working with providers, managed care entities, and other stakeholders to support implementation.

Based on provider feedback and current implementation progress, MassHealth is announcing targeted updates designed to:

- Support continued access to ABA services for members
- Provide a corrective action process for providers actively pursuing accreditation
- Maintain the expectation that all ABA providers achieve nationally-recognized accreditation

Today's key implementation updates

- *Center-based providers not yet accredited by 1/1/27, though in process:* A **six-month corrective action period** for eligible providers **actively pursuing accreditation as of 1/1/27**
- *New providers:* **New provisional pathway** for providers **without prior clinical experience** needed for accreditation
- *Current home- and community-based providers:* **No changes to the January 1, 2028** accreditation timeline

Implementation Updates for Center-Based Providers:

To support continued member access while maintaining the accreditation requirement, eligible center-based providers may continue participating in their managed care entity's (MCE's) MassHealth network during a one-time six-month corrective action period.

What's Changing

Beginning **January 1, 2027**:

Eligible center-based providers that have **started the accreditation process but have not yet completed accreditation** may continue participating in MCE's MassHealth network during a **six-month corrective action period** while working toward accreditation.

*Providers that have **not yet begun the accreditation process** should do so as soon as possible, given the **average reported accreditation timeline** is around 9 months.*

During the corrective action period, providers will:

- Work under a corrective action plan with each contracted MCE
- Pause new member intakes
- Participate in regular communication with contracted MCEs
- Provide a letter from the accrediting organization confirming that the accreditation process is underway
- Notify current families that accreditation is still in progress
- Achieve accreditation by **July 1, 2027**

If accreditation is not achieved by July 1, providers will no longer participate in the MCE's MassHealth network and member transitions will occur.

New Providers Entering the MassHealth Network

MassHealth recognizes that newly established ABA providers may need to begin serving members before they have sufficient clinical experience to complete accreditation.

Brand New Providers

For providers without prior clinical experience needed for accreditation:

Up to one year of provisional participation

Requirements:

- Begin the accreditation process within 60 days of starting services with a MassHealth member
- Provide a letter from the accrediting organization confirming that the accreditation process is underway
- Notify families that accreditation is in progress
- Participate in regular communication with contracted MCEs
- Meet all other requirements of provider contracts with MCEs

Providers expanding contracting to MassHealth MCEs:

Existing ABA provider organizations with sufficient clinical experience to obtain accreditation:

Existing ABA providers seeking to newly contract with MassHealth MCEs after the applicable implementation date **must already meet accreditation requirements at the time of contracting.**

Consistent Accreditation Standards Across ABA Providers

The accreditation requirement applies to **all ABA providers**. The **implementation timeline differs** depending on the type of provider.

Nationally-recognized accreditation is an **important and appropriate method for ensuring that all ABA providers are adhering to high practice standards**.

Members and families should be able to expect consistent standards of quality, clinical oversight, and organizational accountability regardless from which qualified ABA provider they receive services. **The accreditation requirement is intended to establish consistent expectations to ensure high-quality standards** across the ABA provider community.

To support successful implementation:

- The accreditation timeline is phased based on provider type.
- A corrective action period is available for eligible center-based providers actively pursuing accreditation.
- Newly established providers have a provisional pathway while completing accreditation requirements.
- Many accrediting organizations, including ACQ, offer fee structures that vary based on provider size. Providers are encouraged to discuss accreditation costs and timelines directly with the accrediting organizations.

Accreditation Timeline by Provider Scenario

Provider Scenario	Timeline	What this means for providers
Center-based provider already accredited	January 1, 2027 requirement met	Continue maintaining accreditation and communicating with your contracted MCEs as needed.
Center-based provider not yet accredited	Apply As Soon As Possible January 1 - July 1, 2027: One-time corrective action period	If the provider has started the accreditation process but is not yet accredited by January 1, 2027 , MCEs will place the provider in the one-time six-month corrective action period described on a previous slide. Providers that have not yet started accreditation should begin as soon as possible.
Current home- and community-based provider	January 1, 2028	The accreditation requirement and timeline for home- and community-based providers is not changing . Providers should continue preparing to meet the January 1, 2028 accreditation requirement. If providers have not started the accreditation process, it is recommended that they do so as soon as possible.
Brand new provider without prior clinical experience needed for accreditation	At contracting	May be eligible for up to one year of provisional participation following contracting while completing accreditation requirements, subject to specified conditions.
Existing provider newly contracting with a MassHealth MCE after the implementation date	At contracting	Must meet applicable accreditation requirements at the time of contracting .

Plan Contacts

For questions regarding your organization's accreditation status in MCE networks, corrective action plans, or other accreditation concerns, please use these plan contacts:

- Point32Health: Tufts Health Plan Provider Service Center at [888-257-1985](tel:888-257-1985)
- Fallon: Andrea Gewirtz, Andrea.gewirtz@carelon.com; Michael Garafolo michael.garafalo@fallonhealth.org
- MBHP & HNE: Andrea Gewirtz, Andrea.gewirtz@carelon.com
- Mass General Brigham Health Plan/Optum: Heather Willis, heather.willis@optum.com
- WellSense: ABAAccreditation@wellsense.org