4/3/2014

The Alaska Association for Behavior Analysis and its members strongly support professional licensure for Alaska Behavior Analysts (HB 361). We believe that providing state-level professional licensure will better serve Alaskans in the following ways:

1) **The Protection of Clients and Consumers**: Behavior Analysts are often called upon to treat dangerous maladaptive behavior, including self-injury, aggression, and elopement. The behavior analytic literature includes a variety of evidence-based, humane behavioral strategies available to address these issues while working in the best interest of clients and their caregivers. These interventions can only be effectively delivered under the supervision of an experienced and competent behavior analyst. Providing a state-level professional license for behavior analysts will help protect clients and consumers from harmful or ineffective interventions delivered by unqualified individuals.

2) **Protecting a Growing Professional Field**: The number of behavior analysts practicing in the state of Alaska has grown in the last decade, and shows no sign of slowing. The need for a professional level licensure for behavior analysts will become a necessity as the number of behavior analysts in the state continues to grow.

3) **A Step Toward Regulation for Alaska Behavior Analysts**: While the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) has developed an effective system for certifying behavior analysts, the BACB lacks the resources necessary to address ethical and professional regulatory behaviors as they arise (see Dorsey, Weinberg, Zane, & Guidi, 2009; Shook, 2007). A state-level professional license is the first step toward a regulatory board which would allow more immediate access to professional guidance and oversight, ensuring high integrity services for Alaskans.

4) **Addressing Alaska's Most Serious Issues**: A state licensing board would allow the development of behavior analytic services specialized for the unique circumstances facing Alaskan citizens, especially in Alaska's remote communities. In addition, offering a professional license for behavior analysts is one step toward creating a therapeutic treatment milieu in Alaska where our residents are professionally trained to address our key issues. Developing culturally sensitive treatment can help address the unique issues facing Alaska (e.g., higher incidence of suicide, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, children sent out of state for behavioral treatment, etc.).

5) **Expedited Billing for Practitioners**: Currently, behavior analysts are not always able to recoup payment from insurance agencies for services provided to clients. A common rationale provided by these companies is that behavior analysts working in Alaska are not covered by a state-level license. HB 361 will create a state license so that Behavior Analysts can become in-network providers and receive payment for their work, which

will expedite insurance billing and increase the likelihood that clients obtain access to necessary treatments in a timely fashion.

6) **Professional Development Opportunities**: There are currently initiatives in Alaska to provide behavior analytic training to Alaska students. If HB 361 is passed into law, this professional licensure will help facilitate a thriving work environment and will create an opportunity for in-state employment.

In conclusions, the Alaska Association for Behavior Analysis hopes that HB 361 will have a number of benefits for Alaskans, including ensuring the quality of behavioral services provided in Alaska, protecting clients from potentially harmful "behavioral" services provided by unqualified individuals, and helping practicing behavior analysts appropriately bill and receive payment for services provided to clients.

<div align="center">References</div>

Dorsey, M. F., Weinberg, M., Zane, T., & Guidi, M. M. (2009). The case for licensure of applied behavior analysts. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, (2)*1, 53-58.

Shook, G. L. (2007, May). *Ethics in applied behavior analysis: A review of some critical issues.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Behavior Analysis International, San Diego, CA.