

# PA Better Access to Treatment Act (HB19): Update and Current Status

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Disclosure: We have no financial incentives, paid endorsements, or professional engagements related to this work and get no financial or professional gain from passage of this license.



# Who is the ABA in PA Initiative

Lobbying non profit membership organization

**Our Mission:** To increase access to qualified professionals, behavior analytic services, and ensure that our ABA providers have the highest level of expertise.

<https://abainpa.com/>



# What is the Purpose of Professional Licensure?

1. Protect the public
2. Limit license to qualified individuals
3. Ensure ongoing competence and high standards of a particular practice
4. Sanction violations of standards of professional conduct
5. Serve best interest of both the public and the profession



# Better Access to Treatment Act

*Introduced by: Rep. Tom Mehaffie and Rep. Lynda Culver*

## **BAT Act will offer Pennsylvania:**

- Increase **access** to and **quality** of Applied Behavior Analysis-based services in PA, by increasing the number of licensed qualified professionals
- Increase access to high quality ABA-based treatment allowing more citizens with ability to access to effective and value based treatments
- Consumer Protection



# Highlights of the BAT ACT as it stands:

- Officially recognize behavior analysis as a field/profession
- Licensure Requirements
  - Active BCBA
  - Background Checks
  - Fee
  - 2 year renewals with CE requirements
- Categories
  - Licensed BA
  - Licensed Assistant BA
- Under Medical Practice Act in PA
- Exemptions
  - Academia, Other Licensed professionals (licensed psychologist, OT, PT, SLP, LBS), EAB, OBM, students, etc.



# Better Access to Treatment Act

## Key Features:

- Based on the BACB® Model Licensure Act and the “best” of similar laws in 33 other States (including MD, NY, and OH)
- Licensure tied directly to national and profession standards (e.g., BACB)
- Avoids creating additional requirements for applicants
- Keeps costs low and process simple
- Professional and Ethical standards (tied to BACB®)
- Handle professional and ethics complaints
- Language collaboratively written with professional organizations and stakeholders



# History of the BAT ACT Bill

- Introduced on August 1, 2018, by Rep. Mehaffie & Murt (cosponsored by 30 others)
- Given number and assigned to committee
  - House Bill 2725 (will be a new HB# when re-introduced next session)
  - Has been assigned to the licensure committee for review
- Re-introduced in 2021 by Rep Mehaffie and Rep Culver, and sent to licensure committee as HB 19
- Passed licensure committee
- Passed House
- Went to PA Senate licensure committee
- Reintroduced to PA House Licensure committee July 2023



# BAT ACT Next Steps

- Continue to get sponsors/support
- Pass house licensure committee
- Pass house
- Pass Senate
- Governor approves
- Promulgation of Regulations





# BAT ACT Next Steps

- What can you do?:
  - Go to our website to learn more <https://abainpa.com/>
  - Join our social media groups:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1194218561202043/?mibextid=oMANbw>
  - Stay current on status of the bill:  
[https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/bill\\_history.cfm?year=2023&sind=0&body=H&type=B&bn=19](https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/bill_history.cfm?year=2023&sind=0&body=H&type=B&bn=19)
  - Share information about BAT with colleagues, stakeholders, consumers
  - Write letters of support
  - Contact you representative and ask them to support the bill and vote to create **better access to ABA treatment**
  - **House Licensure Committee Members and addresses:**  
<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/cteeInfo/Index.cfm?Code=34&CteeBody=H>



# Sample Letter to Legislators

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_ / Dear Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ ,

We are writing to encourage you to bring House Bill 19 (The Better Access to Treatment Act) to a vote upon return to session. As concerned professionals, we implore you to utilize your voting rights to determine the viability of this bill to move forward.

Pennsylvanians elect you to serve the most vulnerable in our commonwealth who have the most significant needs -- and no way to communicate this to you. By not allowing this consumer protection Bill to be voted on in the licensing committee, you are putting an already vulnerable group in danger of reducing the number of highly qualified professionals that could be available to help support them through their lifespan. There are an estimated 13,000 people on waitlists for services in PA. It is unacceptable, and PA can do better.

**This is a bipartisan Bill.** Your colleagues on both sides of the aisle have pledged their support to ensure critical high quality behavior analytic services are provided by high quality behavior analysts.

Over 30 states already have licensure in place for behavior analysts. Let's bring PA to be the leader in providing these critical behavior analytic services, increase the quality of life for many who would benefit from these services, provide a voice for this vulnerable population, and reduce the reliance on these services and ultimately on the Medicaid system.

Please allow your fellow committee members to vote on HB19, so they can vote the way their constituents would like, so that we can provide high quality behavior analytic services to all Pennsylvanians -- not just children -- but most importantly, allow All Pennsylvanians across their lifespan to increase their quality of life.

Sincerely (feel free to add personal story),

xxx