

## Steven Sepe

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**From:** Al Vario <AVario@trudeaucenter.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 3:27 PM  
**To:** House Health and Human Services Committee  
**Cc:** Grace Duffy  
**Subject:** Written Testimony for House Bill H5253

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

My Name is Albert Vario and I reside at 39 Overlook Lane in Chepachet, RI. I am also the President and Chief Executive Officer for the J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center (the Trudeau Center) based in Warwick, RI. The Trudeau Center was founded in 1964 and supports children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Today I am writing in support of bill **H5253**—related to Applied Behavior Analysis access and reimbursement.

As you likely know, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is one of the few therapies that has scientific backing to effectively treat autism spectrum disorders (autism). For more than 25 years, here at the Trudeau Center we have utilized ABA therapies to bring about meaningful change and an enhanced quality of life for thousands of individuals and their families. The impact is astounding, but the need continues to grow as recent numbers indicate that 1 in every 36 children today are diagnosed with autism. Needless to say, ABA services are important for those in need and accessibility to these services is critical.

The Trudeau organization is grateful to the General Assembly for supporting Applied Behavior Analysis services and for raising Medicaid rates for ABA therapies. That said, it is important to ensure that commercial health insurers in our state maintain competitive rates, at least in-line with the Medicaid rates for ABA, to help maintain the stability of the autism service system. Failure to do so, particularly during these challenging economic times, could have a detrimental impact on service providers, which in turn could impact service availability.

Finally, and with regard to accessibility, it goes without saying that all individuals should have access to this life-changing therapy, regardless of their age or health insurance coverage. As with ensuring adequate reimbursement rates for ABA services, so too is it important to remove age restrictions for Applied Behavior Analysis therapy and to ensure that all health insurance policies include coverage for ABA services. It is my opinion that no one in need should go without this potentially life changing therapy modality.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the Health and Human Services Committee for your consideration of this testimony and for your support of bill **H5253**.

Respectfully,

Albert Vario