



## LaBAA Advocacy Fund Drive 2021

### **Background:**

For the past two years, LaBAA has partnered with the Louisiana Coalition for Access to Autism Services (LCAAS) to engage outside lobbyists to represent our interests at the State Capitol and beyond. Advanced Strategies, Inc., led by Alton Ashe and Ryan Templet, are among the most experienced and effective lobbyists in the state, and have generously agreed to continue working with our organizations at a discounted rate.

### **2020 Advocacy Wins:**

As a direct result of our effective lobbying team, LaBAA and LCAAS notched several wins for access to services in 2020:

- **COVID-19 Guidelines and Reopening:** We worked with LBAB and LDH to ensure the State's guidelines and restrictions for ABA providers was clear and appropriate
- **Telehealth:** We initiated direct communications with both LDH and BCBS to advocate for permanent coverage of telehealth ABA services.
- **2020 Legislative Session:** We advocated for adequate funding and stable reimbursement rates for Medicaid ABA therapy services and monitored all bills throughout the session for any proposed legislation that could have been detrimental to families or providers.
- **Education:** For the first time, LCAAS hosted two Medicaid MCO webinars, designed to help educate MCO staff on ABA practices and procedures and other issues important to ABA providers. Both events were well-attended and received positive feedback.

**What's at Stake:**

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the State's revenue forecast is down significantly. Unfortunately, because of our state budget structure, healthcare is always on the chopping block when state government needs to make cuts. Several years ago, both LDH and Blue Cross Blue Shield threatened major rate cuts to ABA services. We cannot afford for that to happen again, particularly given the rising cost of providing services and the possibility of a \$15 minimum wage that will affect our industry.

Other 2021 Priorities include continued advocacy for permanent coverage of telehealth ABA services, including parent training, as well as more effective access to ABA services in schools, and monitoring of the 2021 Legislative Session, among other things, to ensure reimbursement rates for Medicaid ABA therapy services remain stable.

**What we Need:**

Due to COVID restrictions, LaBAA was unable to host the 2020 Gulf Coast ABA Conference, our primary fund raising event. As a result, our earmarked funds for lobbying services are critically limited. Given the number of current laws, funders, and annual proposed legislative bills, we can no longer rely on a handful of volunteers to monitor and respond to protect our interests.

LaBAA is asking each of you to consider donating \$100, \$250 or \$500 to support these efforts. However, any donation you are able to make is a valuable contribution. We believe professional representation in our advocacy is a critical element for the protection of our consumers and our practices as we provide ABA services to Louisiana families. We hope that you will consider supporting our advocacy efforts for all ABA consumers and providers.

[www.labaa.net](http://www.labaa.net)