

Nationwide Class Action Status is Granted In Case Filed Against CIGNA Insurance For Denying ABA Therapy to Treat Autism

Philadelphia, PA. In a case filed by families covered by CIGNA Insurance – the 4th largest insurer in the country – a federal judge in Philadelphia entered an Order today granting class action status to the case. This means that the case will now be brought on behalf of all persons who filed a claim with CIGNA for ABA therapy for a child having autism spectrum disorder, but no longer have CIGNA insurance, where such claim was denied on the ground that such therapy was allegedly “experimental.”

The ruling was made by Honorable Juan R. Sanchez in the case of Churchill v CIGNA, No. 10-6911 (ED PA). The Court’s Memorandum Opinion explained that class action status on behalf of all similarly situated families was appropriate given CIGNA’s national policy of denying ABA therapy on the ground that it is “experimental.”

The families’ attorneys, Gerard Mantese and John Conway, explained that numerous authorities have long found that ABA is a scientifically valid treatment for children with autism, including the United States Surgeon General, the National Institute of Mental Health, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and a study commissioned for both the Medicare and Medicaid systems. Moreover, 26 states mandate insurance coverage for ABA therapy. Studies show that providing ABA therapy to children with autism allows them to achieve their maximum potential and greater independence in their adult lives.

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