



# STEP-BY-STEP ADVOCACY PLAN

## 1 Identify Issues

- Monitor and track how habilitative and rehabilitative services and devices are covered in your state, specifically related to current policy and plans for 2018, 2019, and beyond.
- Analyze the benchmark plan in your state. Each state has an EHB benchmark plan.<sup>1</sup>
- States can mandate additional coverage beyond the federal requirements for habilitative services and devices. Establish whether coverage is meeting individuals' needs in your state, and, if coverage is inadequate, develop recommendations for supplementing the benchmark plan to meet federal requirements, at a minimum.

## 2 Develop a Systematic Advocacy Plan

- Identify key areas where advocacy is needed to ensure that the benchmark plan is supplemented adequately.
- Identify gaps in coverage and areas where individuals' needs aren't being met. Include those state-specific recommendations in your comments to decision makers.
- Identify ways by giving examples (refer to the Speech, Language, and Hearing Services: Essential Coverage of Habilitation and Rehabilitation advocacy guide) to demonstrate the importance and various benefits of including this coverage.<sup>2</sup>
- Consult ASHA for assistance in coordinating and/or advocating for improved coverage of habilitative services in your state! See ASHA's State Action Toolkit or additional resources on state advocacy.<sup>3</sup>

## 3 Mobilize Your State Association Leaders and Members

- Implement a process for members to provide input on state decisions regarding habilitative and rehabilitative services and devices. ASHA uses its Take Action site to reach members and to contact decision makers.<sup>4</sup>
- Collaborate with other like-minded state associations and groups. Likely partners could be those representing occupational therapy, physical therapy, and consumer advocacy groups.
- Engage your lobbyists and advocacy leaders to take advantage of this opportunity to protect and maintain coverage of member services. Have your lobbyists or volunteer advocates arrange meetings with the key individuals in your state (e.g., state legislator, insurance department, advocacy partners) and walk them through the recommendations in the guide. Add as much information as possible about the importance of coverage and its impact in your state.
- Empower your membership by providing information on key issues and encouraging meeting attendance. For example, provide access to the advocacy guide or the included Habilitation Talking Points and Fact Sheet.<sup>5</sup>
- Reach out to legislators, regulators, and the health insurance marketplace (if applicable) in your state using the recommendations in the Speech, Language, and Hearing Services: Essential Coverage of Habilitation and Rehabilitation advocacy guide.
- Make sure your state legislature and insurance department are aware of the federal habilitative services and devices definition; see §156.115, Provision of Essential Health Benefits (EHBs; p. 450).<sup>6</sup> Refer to the HealthCare.gov website for the complete list of Affordable Care Act (ACA) EHBs.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (n.d.). Information on Essential Health Benefits (EHB) benchmark plans. Retrieved from <https://www.cms.gov/ccio/resources/data-resources/ehb.html>

<sup>2</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Speech, Language and Hearing Services: Essential Coverage Of Habilitation And Rehabilitation advocacy guide <http://www.asha.org/uploadedFiles/ASHA/Practice/Health-Care-Reform/essential-coverage-of-habilitation-and-rehabilitation-advocacy-guide.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. State Action Toolkit. Available at: <https://www.asha.org/Advocacy/state/stateactiontoolkit/>

<sup>4</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). ASHA Take Action. Available at <https://takeaction.asha.org/?0>

<sup>5</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Habilitation Talking Points and Fact Sheet <http://www.asha.org/uploadedFiles/ASHA/Practice/Health-Care-Reform/Habilitation-Talking-Points-and-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Department of Health and Human Services. (2015). Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; HHS Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2016. Retrieved from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/publicinspection.federalregister.gov/2015-03751.pdf>