



Association for Behavioral  
Health and Wellness

*Advancing benefits and services  
in mental health, substance use  
and behavior change.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Insurer Industry Group Commends President's Declaration of National Emergency Over Opioid Epidemic**

WASHINGTON (August 10, 2017) – The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW), the national voice for payers that manage behavioral health insurance benefits for over 170 million people, today issued the following statement in response to President Trump declaring a national emergency over the opioid epidemic.

The following statement is attributed to Pamela Greenberg, MPP, President and CEO, Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness:

“This is the right recommendation of the President’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis and the right decision by the President to declare a state of emergency over this unprecedented crisis.

“Our member companies are at the forefront of addressing this issue and will continue to work with consumers, public health officials, the Administration, and local and community providers until we eradicate this epidemic.

“ABHW supports this decision. The opioid epidemic that we are facing today is pervasive and crippling our nation. It is no longer ‘someone else’s problem.’ This crisis is affecting all walks of life and knows no boundaries.

“We commend the recommendations of the Commission and the Administration in their effort to address this epidemic here in the United States. In particular, ABHW supports the Commission’s endorsement of the bipartisan bill recently introduced by Congressmen Murphy and Blumenauer, the Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety (OPPS) Act of 2017, H.R. 3545. This is a key piece of legislation that will allow appropriate access to patient information which is essential for providing safe, effective, whole-person coordinated care, while strengthening protections against the use of substance use disorder records in criminal proceedings. We also applaud the recommendations to approve waivers for states to eliminate barriers to treatment resulting from the federal Institutes for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion and to expand access to Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMP) data to better identify individuals at risk of prescription drug abuse to enable greater coordination across health care entities.

“As the Commission begins its work on the final report, we hope they will examine ways to assist people in their recovery and suggest activities to reduce the stigma surrounding substance use disorders.”

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ABHW Whitepaper on the Opioid Crisis: [Behavioral Health Organizations’ Current and Future Approaches to Addressing the U.S. Opioid Crisis](#)

*ABHW is an association of the nation’s leading behavioral health and wellness companies. These companies provide an array of services related to mental health, substance use disorders, employee assistance, disease management, and other health and wellness programs to over 170 million people in both the public and private sectors. ABHW and its member companies use their behavioral health expertise to improve health care outcomes for individuals and families across the health care spectrum. Member companies - Aetna Behavioral Health, Anthem, Beacon Health Options, Centene Corporation, Cigna, Humana Behavioral Health, New Directions Behavioral Health, Optum, and PerformCare.*