



Association for Behavioral
Health and Wellness

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

For Our Community: Hurricane Relief Efforts

October 4, 2017 -- In the wake of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, three of the most devastating natural disasters in U.S. history, the [Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness](#) (ABHW) member companies and their employees reached out beyond themselves and answered the call of communities in need. Efforts included:

- [Aetna](#) opened its [Resources for Living](#) services to impacted communities regardless of whether they are Aetna members or not. Aetna is working closely with providers to ensure members have access to care and Aetna is helping members who have been evacuated from their homes find behavioral health support, among other services. The [Aetna Foundation](#) has donated over \$250,000 towards hurricane relief efforts.
- [Beacon Health Options \(Beacon\)](#), and its network provider, Motivational Coaches of America (MCUSA), is providing counselors to be stationed at affected area schools and shelters to provide in-person behavioral health and emotional support to children affected by Hurricane Irma free of charge and offered to all children, regardless of their health coverage status.
- [Cigna](#) has expanded access to its 24x7 telephone help line to provide personal assistance and support for all residents in affected areas. Phone lines are staffed with qualified clinicians who are available to speak with people about how to cope with loss, anxiety, stress or other issues resulting from the hurricane. In addition, Cigna and Cigna-HealthSpring lifted prescription refill restrictions, and also waived prior authorization requirements for acute medical care and behavioral health services in affected areas.
- [Humana](#) has donated \$250,000 to the American Red Cross to provide vital relief services, including food, shelter and other related disaster assistance. Humana opened its toll-free crisis intervention hotline and counseling services beyond employees and members to include any individual who may need assistance in areas impacted by the hurricanes. For all affected members, Humana has suspended referrals and prior authorization requirements for acute, post-acute, outpatient and



**Association for Behavioral
Health and Wellness**

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

physician services. Humana also is providing impacted members who need out-of-network care in Puerto Rico with the same benefits they would get from an in-network health care provider or facility.

- [New Directions Behavioral Health](#) (New Directions) is offering emotional support by opening its call center to anyone affected by the recent hurricanes. New Directions has licensed clinicians available to take calls 24x7, and triage immediate clinical needs. The clinicians also guide people to available community resources.
- [Optum](#) and its parent company [UnitedHealth Group](#) took action to help. The company and its employees donated more than \$7 million in funds, medicines and humanitarian aid towards relief and recovery efforts in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico. Optum is also offering its toll-free emotional support line to anyone who has been affected and the WellMed clinical team provided on-the-ground assistance at local relief centers. In addition, they offered support to employees and their families affected by the storms, including emergency financial assistance, flexibility around time away from work, help finding lodging and more.
- [AmeriHealth Caritas](#), parent company of [PerformCare](#), and its business partners acted quickly and decisively in the wake of recent weather events. Prestige Health Choice, a joint venture between AmeriHealth Caritas and Florida Blue, collaborated with Feeding Florida, a statewide association of food banks, to support Florida families affected by the hurricane. They also have arranged for a semi-trailer truck with food, personal care items and housing supplies to be distributed throughout impacted areas following the storms. AmeriHealth Caritas is working to ensure continuity of care to its members in coordination with state health departments in impacted areas.

As those impacted by the storms begin to process the devastating loss of family, friends, and property, and somehow start to put their lives back together, the sense of, and support for, community is strong. In the long term, the primary public health concern is the mental health of those impacted. ABHW member companies will continue to dedicate each and every day to providing access to quality behavioral health care.



**Association for Behavioral
Health and Wellness**

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

###

[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 175 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.