



Association for Behavioral
Health and Wellness

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 26, 2017

Contact: Tiffany Huth
Phone: (202) 487.8057
Email: Huth@abhw.org

ABHW Statement On The Trump Administration's Opioid Announcement

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 26, 2017) – The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW), the national voice for payers that manage behavioral health insurance benefits for over 175 million people, today issued the following statement in response to President Trump’s declaration of the opioid crisis a Nationwide Public Health Emergency. The following statement is attributed to Pamela Greenberg, M.P.P., President and CEO, Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness:

“While the declaration does help bring much needed attention to this crisis, we sincerely hope that the Administration takes further action soon; perhaps following the President’s Commission on Combatting the Opioid Crisis’s final report slated to be released next week. One important solution to this crisis is amending substance use disorder privacy regulations to provide safe, effective, integrated care for patients with opioid use disorder.

“ABHW supports the bipartisan bills the Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety (OPPS) Act of 2017, H.R. 3545, introduced by Congressmen Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Markwayne Mullin (R-OK), and the Protecting Jessica Grubb’s Legacy Act (Legacy Act), S. 1850, introduced by Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV). These pieces of legislation will grant appropriate sharing of substance use disorder records which is essential for providing accurate diagnoses, whole-person coordinated care, and effective treatment.

“There is a large voice, not just of payers, but of providers, hospitals, pharmacists, treatment centers, elected officials, families, and communities that support changes to the sharing of substance use disorder records for the purposes of effective coordinated treatment for those suffering from opioid addiction. This is an easy regulatory fix that will improve care, help stop overdoses and deaths, and is not costly to implement.

“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.

“We look forward to learning more about the expanded access to telemedicine services and changes to the Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion mentioned today. ABHW is supportive of eliminating the IMD exclusion and reducing barriers to telemedicine as both would increase treatment options available to individuals with an opioid use disorder.

ABHW Written Comments to the [President’s Commission on Combatting Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, October 20, 2017](#)

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.