



**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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Contact: Tiffany A. Huth

Phone: 202.487.8057

Email: Huth@abhw.org

ABHW Has Serious Concerns About the Senate Health Care Bill

Washington, DC (June 23, 2017) – The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW), an association of the nation's leading behavioral health and wellness companies serving over 170 million people, today released the following statement in response to the Senate version of the American Health Care Act (AHCA), the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) of 2017:

“We have serious concerns about the impact this legislation’s changes would have on individuals with mental health and substance use disorders (MH/SUD).

“States’ ability to expand access to Medicaid, along with the guarantee of coverage for mental and substance use disorders, increased behavioral health coverage to approximately 1.3 million Americans. Phasing out the federal matching rate for these individuals and not assuring a mental health and addiction benefit is taking a step backward. At a time when deaths from opioid overdoses and suicide are at a high we should be fortifying benefits for these individuals, not dismantling them.

“Behavioral health is an integral part of whole health and appropriate treatment for these illnesses not only leads to recovery but also aids in the improvement of a person’s physical health. Approximately 1.8 million of the 21 million people covered under provisions of the Affordable Care Act in January 2017 were receiving mental health services and subsidies; approximately 1.25 million people with serious mental disorders and about 2.8 million American with a substance use disorder would lose some or all of their coverage under the Senate version of the AHCA.”

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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.