



**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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## **ALL ABHW WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS ARE CHANGES TO THE SUBSTANCE USE PRIVACY LAW**

**Washington, DC (December 22, 2015)** – Today, the Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) released a paper, *Now is the Time to Strengthen Protection of Substance Use Records by Revisiting the Substance Use Privacy Law*, expressing the need for changes to the Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records, 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 2 (Part 2). Part 2 is an outdated federal regulation that hinders safe, effective, high quality substance use treatment.

In May 2014, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) stated that “behavioral health is essential to overall health and the costs of untreated substance abuse disorders, both personal and societal, are enormous.” SAMHSA expressed an interest in examining the burden associated with specific consent requirements that don’t necessarily protect privacy and may be a barrier to coordinated care. A proposed rule revising Part 2 is currently under review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

“ABHW hopes that the proposed rule will be released shortly and will bring substance use privacy protections into harmony with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act. Separation of substance use from the rest of medicine creates several problems: primary care lacks the ability to coordinate a patient’s medical and substance use treatment; substance use treatment programs lack the capability to coordinate a patient’s medical and substance use care; and, patients are put at risk of unsafe, uncoordinated and uninformed care,” said Pamela Greenberg, ABHW President and CEO.

ABHW’s [paper](#) proposes changes that can be made to Part 2 that balance the need to facilitate communications in support of safe, high quality health care with the need to protect the privacy interests of persons who seek treatment for substance use disorders.

*The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) is the national voice for specialty behavioral health and wellness companies. ABHW member companies - Aetna Behavioral Health, Anthem, Beacon Health Options, Cenpatco, Cigna, Healthfirst, Humana Behavioral Health, MHN, New Directions Behavioral Health, Optum, and PerformCare - provide specialty services to treat mental health, substance use and other behaviors that impact health. ABHW supports effective federal, state and accrediting organization policies that ensure specialty behavioral health organizations (BHOs) can continue to increase quality, manage costs and promote wellness for the nearly 150 million people served by our members. For more information, please visit [www.abhw.org](http://www.abhw.org).*

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