



**Association for Behavioral  
Health and Wellness**

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

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**ABHW Sends Letter to House Leadership Over AHCA Concerns**

WASHINGTON (March 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 sent a letter to the United States House of Representatives leadership to express concerns over the American Health Care Act (AHCA).*

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

“We are concerned that the legislation’s changes to our health care system will hamper the improvements that have been made in recent years to support the mental health and substance use disorder (MH/SUD) population in our country.

“Approximately 1.8 million people covered under the Affordable Care Act are currently receiving mental health services and subsidies, and about 2.8 million Americans with a substance use disorder, of whom about 222,000 have an opioid disorder, would lose some or all of their coverage if the ACA is fully repealed. The AHCA in its current form would take away at least \$5.5 billion in one year from the treatment of low income people with mental health and substance use disorder.

“We are concerned with the AHCA’s reconfiguration of the Medicaid program and elimination of Essential Health Benefits. One in five of Medicaid’s nearly 70 million patients has a MH/SUD diagnosis. The Medicaid expansion program has provided coverage to persons with MH/SUD who might not have otherwise had access to care, and it led to significant increases in coverage and treatment access for that population.

“We would like to remind Congress that proposed changes to our health care system will negatively impact the millions of Americans with mental illness and addiction and will result in a step backward from the positive gains from the bipartisan 21st Century Cures Act and Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act enacted last year.”

ABHW letter to Congress can be found [here](#).

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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.*