



**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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### **ABHW Issues Statement in Wake of House Passage of AHCA**

**Washington, DC (May 4, 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 House passage of the American Health Care Act (AHCA):

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

“We are concerned that the AHCA’s reconfiguration of the Medicaid program will result in a significant decrease of coverage and treatment access for the one in five of Medicaid’s nearly 70 million patients who has a MH/SUD diagnosis.

“Coverage for MH/SUD benefits are vital to people with a behavioral health illness. Because 25 percent of the population has a mental illness, and a mental illness or substance use disorder can arise at any time, MH/SUD treatment services are a crucial element of health care coverage. The rising opioid crisis in our country provides even more reason to ensure appropriate access to MH/SUD treatment. ABHW supports the inclusion of a MH/SUD benefit in all policies.

“We would like to remind Congress that the changes in the AHCA 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. We encourage the Senate to give serious consideration to how any proposed changes to our health care system will impact individuals with MH/SUD.”

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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.*