



ABHW ■ 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

# WORKING TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY CARE

Raising awareness and reducing stigma so everyone can get the care they need

**The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW)** advocates on behalf of health plans for improved access and higher quality mental health and addiction care, ensuring better health outcomes for individuals and communities.

Founded in 1994, ABHW is dedicated to shifting the paradigm in treatment and policies for mental health and addiction to support access to quality care, improve overall health outcomes, and advance solutions for public health challenges. Our members are health plans that share our commitment to excellence in mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

## 2019 SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

- **BUILT** a three-pronged regulatory, legislative, and communications strategy with the Partnership to Amend 42 CFR Part 2.
- **ADVISED** key agency and administration officials and members of Congress, sharing thought leadership around critical mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) issues.
- **HOSTED** a press briefing on behalf of the Partnership to Amend 42 CFR Part 2, laying groundwork for upcoming media coverage.
- **SUBMITTED** comments and letters regarding Medicare, parity, telehealth, and the opioid crisis, among others.
- **LAUNCHED** the new ABHW website, logo, and brand to enhance the impact of our mission.
- **GREW** the number of health plan members and corporate partner members of ABHW.
- **REVAMPED** the ABHW Corporate Partner Program to increase support for behavioral health issues.
- **ACHIEVED** continued growth for the Stamp Out Stigma public health campaign and launched its new website.
- **HOSTED** the second annual ABHW Behavioral Health Policy Summit in collaboration with the World Congress and a successful ABHW Hill Day.

# AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE ISSUES THAT MATTER

## ■ PRIVACY & PART 2

### Moving Forward

As founder and chair of the Partnership to Amend 42 CFR Part 2, a coalition of nearly 50 organizations, **ABHW continues to shape the conversation around aligning SUD privacy regulations—42 CFR Part 2 (Part 2)—with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)** for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations to ensure coordinated care and patient safety. Our 2019 achievements include:

- **Working** with the bill sponsors and the Partnership to support reintroduction of the Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act (OPPS) (H.R. 2062) and the Protecting Jessica Grubb's Legacy Act (S. 1012) in the 116th Congress.
- **Arranging** meetings with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary and other high-ranking officials to discuss ABHW's legal brief and the Partnership's comment letter on the Part 2 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

## ■ MEDICAID & MEDICARE

### Improving Care

ABHW supports policies that ensure access to medically necessary, evidence-based behavioral treatment for the Medicaid and Medicare populations.

In 2019, ABHW influenced Medicaid and Medicare policy through comment letters, meetings, and coalition work:

## ■ Medicaid

Our advocacy focused on: Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) restrictions, medical loss ratio (MLR), information requirements, network adequacy standards, Medicaid Managed Care Quality Rating System (QRS), adverse benefit determinations, the appeals process, and the privacy of SUD records.

## ■ Medicare

Our efforts supported increasing coverage for telehealth; developing bundled payment models for opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment services; educating Medicare beneficiaries about available OUD treatment options; expanding the types of behavioral health providers available to Medicare beneficiaries; and creating a new category of supplemental benefits for the chronically ill.

## ■ ADDICTION IN THE UNITED STATES

### Beyond the Opioid Epidemic

ABHW and its members work to promote a continuum of evidence-based, person-centered care to reduce, recognize, and treat people with SUDs. In addition to our focus on Part 2, our advocacy work centers on:

- **Implementing** the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act.
- **Advocating** for health plan access to Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs). Real-time updates and access is an important step to making PDMPs a successful tool in decreasing overprescribing and opioid misuse.

## TALK ABOUT IT.



## STAMP OUT STIGMA

An initiative spearheaded by ABHW to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness and SUDs, Stamp Out Stigma aims to transform the dialogue on mental health and addiction from a whisper to a conversation. In 2019, we:

- **Launched** the new Stamp Out Stigma website ([stampoutstigma.com](http://stampoutstigma.com)), giving

the campaign an enhanced ability to share information and connect with audiences.

- **Achieved** a 33% increase in Twitter followers, exceeding our 20% year-end goal.
- **Partnered** with Project UROK, the Journal of Addiction Medicine, Crisis Text Line, Movember, Trevor Project, NAMI, Shatterproof, American

Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and other influential organizations as part of an ongoing monthly Twitter chat series.

- **Garnered** 73M Twitter impressions during Mental Health Awareness Month (May).
- **Joined** Optum during Recovery Month (September) for an educational media campaign aimed to help eliminate stigma.



- **Increasing** the number of providers treating SUDs and providing medication-assisted treatment (MAT).
- **Supporting** the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act of 2019 to eliminate the Drug Enforcement Administration’s (DEA) separate registration requirements for prescribing buprenorphine.

■ **MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION PARITY**

## Working for Fairness

In 2019, ABHW and its members continued to work on the implementation, interpretation, and enforcement of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA). Our work included:

- **Participating** in a mental health and SUD roundtable discussion at the Department of Labor regarding parity implementation, successes, and challenges.
- **Commenting** on the Internal Revenue Service’s (IRS’s) Notice and Request for Comments on information collection activities to the draft model disclosure request form.
- **Advising** Clear Health Quality Institute on their Parity Accreditation Program.
- **Participating** in the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) event “Turning the Tide—Improving Access to Addiction Care and Overcoming Obstacles to Parity.”
- **Negotiating** changes to parity provisions included in the Lower Health Care Costs Act of 2019.

■ **TELEHEALTH**

## Expanding Access

Expanding access to telehealth services is a priority for ABHW and its member companies. This year we responded to a letter from the Congressional Telehealth

## CORPORATE PARTNER PROGRAM

ABHW’s Corporate Partner Program supports crucial behavioral health issues. Ranging from telepsychiatry to pharmaceutical, and from digital therapeutics to diagnostics, our corporate partners have the opportunity to focus on areas of common interest and engage with behavioral health executives to ensure access to quality care and improve overall health outcomes.

This year, we restructured the Corporate Partner Program to provide partners greater opportunities to engage health plans about their public policy and legislative interests.

### OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS

Alkermes

Genomind  
(new 2019)

Indivior

innovaTel  
Telepsychiatry  
(new 2019)

Johnson & Johnson  
Health Care  
Systems, Inc.

Myriad

PsychHub  
(new 2019)

Sage Therapeutics  
(new 2019)

Caucus seeking legislative recommendations on how to expand access to telehealth, improve patient outcomes, and lower costs, as part of the process of crafting new telehealth legislation. We worked with congressional staff to include provisions in the Creating Opportunities Now for Necessary and Effective Care Technologies (CONNECT) for Health Act of 2019 that would expand the use of telehealth for mental health services by:

- **Removing** the geographic restrictions on originating sites.
- **Adding** the home as an originating site.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION: A BETTER HOTLINE NUMBER

ABHW supports the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and proposed federal legislation, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2019 (S.2661, H.R. 4194), to implement 9-8-8 as the 3-digit number for the national suicide prevention hotline.

## OUR MEMBERS

ABHW members include top national and regional health plans that provide coverage to more than 200 million people in both the public and private sectors.

Our member companies bring substantial knowledge and experience in mental health and substance use disorders, integration, and patient-centered treatment and recovery, and lead the industry in preventative and collaborative models of care.

Aetna  
Behavioral  
Health

Beacon  
Health Options

Magellan  
Health

AmeriHealth  
Caritas

Centene Corporation

New Directions  
Behavioral  
Health

Anthem

Cigna

Optum

Kaiser Permanente

(New member, 2019)



## ABHW ■ WHAT WE DO



### EDUCATE

federal policy makers, associations, accreditation organizations, and the media on the value and effectiveness of behavioral health services provided by health plans.



### ADVOCATE

for policies that ensure health plans can continue to effectively increase quality, manage costs, and improve health care outcomes.



### PROMOTE

quality health care delivery that strives to achieve recovery, wellness, and a productive workforce.



### COLLABORATE

within the industry and with key stakeholders to exchange ideas and offer creative solutions to ongoing and emerging challenges.

This was a very productive year for ABHW, marked by steady progress in advancing federal policy on mental health and addiction services. We look forward to additional improvements to behavioral health policies in FY 2020, as we continue to advocate for access to quality care and improved health outcomes for individuals facing some of our nation's most critical public health challenges.

— PAMELA GREENBERG, MPP  
PRESIDENT AND CEO