



Advancing Health Care Policy  
for Mental Health and Addiction

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ABHW Submits Behavioral Health Recommendations for Future Comprehensive Mental Health Legislation**

Washington, DC (May 28, 2020) – The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW), the national voice for payers that manage behavioral health insurance benefits for over 200 million people, today submitted a letter recommending future mental health and addiction policy proposals to Congressional members.

ABHW and its member companies encourage Representatives Joseph Kennedy (D-MA), Paul Tonko (D-NY), Doris Matsui (D-CA), Tony Cardenas (D-CA), and David Trone (D-MD) to consider the following solutions and improvements to the behavioral health system as they explore long-term legislation and policies that can play a critical role in expanding access to mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) services post the novel coronavirus pandemic.

- Increase the number of mental health and addiction professionals in communities to help confront the behavioral health workforce shortage that hinders so many individuals and families from accessing care; include policies that strengthen and expand the behavioral health workforce and enhance the existing provider infrastructure in order to help ensure people who need mental health and/or SUD treatment get the care they need.
- Waive restrictions on how and where individuals can access telehealth services.
- End the Institution for Mental Disease (IMD) exclusion, which prohibits Medicaid reimbursement for adults under 65 in residential behavioral health facilities with more than 16 beds.

Read ABHW's complete letter >> [HERE](#)

In addition to these policy suggestions, ABHW recently issued legislative and policy recommendations to Congressional Leadership in response to the immediate [COVID-19 crisis](#).

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[ABHW](#) is the leading health plan association working to improve access and quality of care for mental health and substance use disorders. ABHW's members include national and regional health plans who care for more than 200 million people. Together we work to reduce stigma and advance federal policy on mental health and addiction care. Member companies - Aetna Behavioral Health, AmeriHealth Caritas, Anthem, Centene Corporation, Cigna, Kaiser Permanente, Magellan Health, New Directions Behavioral Health, and Optum.