



Advancing Health Care Policy
for Mental Health and Addiction

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Trump Signs Bill Establishing 9-8-8 as the National Suicide Hotline

Washington, DC (October 20, 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, released the following statement in response to President Donald Trump signing the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act into law, which will put the 9-8-8 number into effect in 2022.

A new bipartisan National Suicide Hotline Designation bill signed into law on Saturday, October 17th, will make 9-8-8 the universal telephone number to contact the national suicide prevention hotline. The law would help ensure access to an easy-to-remember, three-digit line that puts people directly in touch with trained counselors. It also would provide vital federal reporting and specialized service training for at-risk populations, including Black youths and the LGBTQ community.

“ABHW and our members are thankful for the bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress for passing this law and the dedication to addressing this vitally important issue,” stated Pamela Greenberg, President and CEO, Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness. “In 2017, suicide was the second leading cause of death among people aged 10-34; the suicide rate among Black youths doubled from 2007 to 2017; and lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are almost five times more likely to attempt suicide than their straight youth counterparts. Passage of the 9-8-8 number is a step forward to address the stigma that prevents too many people from seeking and receiving help,” Greenberg concluded.

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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/Beacon, Centene Corporation, Cigna, Kaiser Permanente, Magellan Health, New Directions Behavioral Health, and Optum.