



Advancing Health Care Policy  
for Mental Health and Addiction

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ABHW COMMENTS ON FCC'S FURTHER NOTICE ON  
9-8-8 SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE**

**Washington, DC (July 16, 2021)** – The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW), the national voice for payers that manage behavioral health insurance benefits for over 200 million people, submitted comments on the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) further notice of proposed rulemaking (FNPR) related to text to 9-8-8.

ABHW members remain committed to efforts related to suicide prevention. As the FCC's 2019 report to Congress states, suicide rates increased in 49 states between 1999 and 2016. Additionally, in 2017, more than 1.4 million adults attempted suicide, more than 47,000 people died by suicide, and suicide was the second leading cause of death among people aged 10-24.

ABHW supports allowing individuals in crisis or contemplating death by suicide to text to 9-8-8 to increase access to this life-saving service. We also reiterate that not only must the FCC make a substantial initial investment to get the crisis line off the ground, but also continue the investment to ensure that individuals receive timely attention from appropriately trained personnel. We believe that without proper financing, the 988-crisis line cannot be utilized to its full potential and may lead to unnecessary harm to individuals, as they may not receive the care they need in time.

Full comments can be found [HERE](#).

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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.