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The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) Responds to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s Updated National Behavioral Health Crisis Care Guidance

Washington D.C. – The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW), the national voice for payers that manage behavioral health insurance benefits for over 200 million people, issued the following statement in response to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s updated [National Behavioral Health Crisis Care Guidance](#) (National Guidance), which is comprised of three documents: 2025 National Guidelines for a Behavioral Health Coordinated System of Crisis Care; Model Definitions for Behavioral Health Emergency, Crisis, and Crisis-Related Services; and a draft of Mobile Crisis Team Services: An Implementation Toolkit.

ABHW appreciates SAMHSA's promotion of quality care for behavioral health crises across the country. ABHW and our members are committed to ensuring full continuum of behavioral health delivery with appropriate care coordination for individuals. Consistent language outlined in the National Guidance will also help payers, providers, and other stakeholders ensure comprehensive crisis services.

ABHW looks forward to reviewing and commenting on the Mobile Crisis Team Services: An Implementation Toolkit.

“ABHW participated in the workgroup that developed the model definitions for SAMHSA's National Guidance and supports an evidence-based continuum of crisis care for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis throughout the U.S. at a time when we continue to face record high rates of suicide and overdose,” said Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) President and CEO Debbie

Witchey. “These guidelines and definitions are a step toward creating consistency in services available to individuals in need of crisis services.”

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ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

ABHW is the nation’s only health plan association that is exclusively dedicated to improving access and quality of care for mental health and substance use disorders. ABHW’s members include national and regional health plans that care for more than 200 million people. Together, we work to reduce stigma and advance federal policy on mental health and substance use disorder care. ABHW member companies – Aetna, a CVS Health Company; CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield; Centene Corporation; Elevance Health; Evernorth; Kaiser Permanente; Lucet; Magellan Health; Molina Healthcare; Optum; and PerformCare, a subsidiary of AmeriHealth Caritas. To learn more, visit www.abhw.org and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).