



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) Announces New Board Chair

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, announced the appointment of its new Board Chair, Brad Lerner, Director of Public Policy, Behavioral Health at Carelon Behavioral Health, an Elevance Health Company.

Brad formerly served as Vice President of Government Affairs and Associate General Counsel for Beacon Health Options. He is a government relations professional with more than 30 years of public and private sector experience analyzing and addressing regulatory issues, including complex legal and policy issues in health care. He is a leading expert on the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA), providing analysis on compliance and works with federal and state policymakers on ways to improve the mental health and substance use disorders system of care.

Brad is joined by James Laughman, President of PerformCare, a subsidiary of AmeriHealth Caritas, and Deborah Fernandez-Turner, Deputy Chief Psychiatric Officer at Aetna, a CVS Health Company, on the Executive Committee of the ABHW Board of Directors for the 2025-2027 term.

“I am deeply honored and excited to serve as Board Chair for the Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness,” said Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) Board Chair Brad Lerner. “This is a pivotal time for ABHW, and I look forward to working alongside the members of the board and ABHW staff to build on our past successes and chart a path forward for even greater achievements.”

“We are thrilled to welcome Brad Lerner as our new Board Chair,” said Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) President and CEO Debbie Witchey. “Brad’s leadership, vision, and deep commitment to our mission will be invaluable as we work to put the consumer first to advance policies that improve mental health and substance use disorder care and navigate new opportunities. I look forward to working closely with Brad and the board to drive ABHW toward transformative care delivery.”

Brad previously served as a subcommittee chair on the American Health Lawyers Association Behavioral Health Task Force. In addition, he worked as a regulatory attorney at the Federal Communications Commission and as in-house counsel at Cavalier Telephone, LLC. He holds a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Michigan and a Juris Doctor from Wayne State University Law School.

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ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

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 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 Behavioral Health, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, Centene Corporation/Magellan Health, Celeron Behavioral Health, an Elevance Health company, Evernorth, a Cigna company, Kaiser Permanente, Lucet, Molina Healthcare, Optum, and PerformCare, a subsidiary of AmeriHealth Caritas. To learn more, visit www.abhw.org and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).