



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Angela Lee

Lee@abhw.org

703-999-5170

The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) Appreciates the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)'s Forthcoming Extension of the Telehealth Prescribing Rule

Washington, D.C. – The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW), the national voice for payers that manage behavioral health insurance benefits for 200 million people, is grateful that the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will once again extend flexibilities allowing for the teleprescribing of controlled substances for the fourth time. This extension will ensure that patients can continue receiving the care they need.

ABHW and our member companies urge the DEA to extend the flexibilities for at least one year to ensure that patients have uninterrupted access to clinically appropriate treatment. Without DEA action, the flexibilities are scheduled to expire this year on December 31.

While ABHW appreciates this necessary extension, we are still awaiting the implementation of the buprenorphine rule, which was finalized in January of this year, that allows providers to teleprescribe a six-month supply of buprenorphine without an in-person visit. We continue to encourage the DEA to issue a final rule establishing a special registration process that allows qualified providers to prescribe specific controlled substances without an in-person visit to enhance patient care and effectively serve the broader public interest.

“Access to opioid use disorder treatment is critical to curbing the overdose epidemic and supporting individuals on their path to recovery,” said ABHW President and CEO Debbie Witchey. “Medications like buprenorphine are proven, lifesaving treatments for opioid use disorder, yet fewer than one in five people who need them receive them. Removing obstacles and creating practical pathways for telehealth prescribing are essential to helping individuals get the treatment they need and closing the treatment gap. As such, we hope the DEA’s fourth extension of the telehealth prescribing flexibilities will last for at least one year to ensure continuity of care and that the buprenorphine final rule will permanently allow teleprescribing of the medication.”

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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 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; Caredon Behavioral Health, an Elevance Health Company; Centene Corporation; 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 [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).