



**Association for Behavioral
Health and Wellness**

*Advancing benefits and services
in mental health, substance use
and behavior change.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ABHW Applauds HELP Committee Passage of The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018 (S. 2680)

Washington, DC (April 24, 2018) – The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW), the national voice for payers that manage behavioral health insurance benefits for over 175 million people, expressed its appreciation to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) for taking a leadership role in combatting the opioid epidemic by passing The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018 (S. 2680).

In a letter sent to Chairman Lamar Alexander and Ranking Member Patty Murray of the HELP Committee, ABHW praised the Committee for addressing the opioid epidemic on multiple levels. Specifically, ABHW and its members support the following:

- Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) -- Real time updates and data sharing between states is an important step to making PDMPs a successful tool in decreasing overprescribing and opioid misuse. ABHW supports the PDMP measures that are contained within S. 2680 and believe increased funding for cooperation between states will lead to a more comprehensive PDMP system.
- Improving Access for Telemedicine and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) -- Increasing access to telemedicine for individuals who are receiving substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. MAT represents the best evidence-based care for people with opioid use disorder (OUD) and should be the standard of care. Allowing patients to receive these life-saving drugs through telemedicine will improve access for people with SUD in rural and underserved areas.
- Development of Recovery Housing Best Practices -- Best practices and model state laws for recovery housing will create an environment of accountability and improve outcomes for patients seeking recovery.

ABHW hopes that S. 1850, The Protecting Jessica Grubb's Legacy Act, is considered for inclusion as the bill proceeds to the Senate floor. According to comments sent by the group on April 11, 2018, ABHW members attest that 42 CFR Part 2 (Part 2), the outdated 1970s federal regulations governing the confidentiality of drug and alcohol treatment and prevention records, is one of the biggest – if not the biggest – barriers to fighting the opioid crisis.



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“The Protecting Jessica Grubb’s Legacy Act, S. 1850, co-sponsored by Senators Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Joe Manchin (D-WV), would align Part 2 with HIPAA for the purposes of health care treatment, payment, and operations and strengthen protections against the use of SUD records in criminal proceedings. We strongly recommend adding this legislation in the final version of the opioid legislation,” stated Pamela Greenberg, MPP, President and CEO, Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness.

ABHW April 23rd: [Letter to the HELP Committee](#)

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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 175 million people. Together we work to reduce stigma and advance federal policy on mental health and addiction care. Member companies - Aetna Behavioral Health, Anthem, Beacon Health Options, Centene Corporation, Cigna, New Directions Behavioral Health, Optum, and PerformCare.