

ABHW ■ 2018 YEAR IN REVIEW

WORKING TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY CARE

Raising awareness and reducing stigma so everyone can get the care they need

The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) is the leading association working to advance federal policy on mental health and addiction services.

Founded in 1994, ABHW is dedicated to shifting the paradigm in treatment and policies for mental health and addiction to ensure access to quality care, improve overall health outcomes, and advance solutions for public health challenges. Our members are health plans that share our commitment to excellence in mental health and substance abuse disorder treatment.

2018 SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

- **PASSED** legislation aligning 42 CFR Part 2 with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 357-57.
- **WORKED** on the passage of opioid legislation, the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act, P.L. 115-271.
- **PUBLISHED** "Telebehavioral Health Care: A Solution to Impact Cost, Access, and Quality of Care," a white paper providing a comprehensive overview of the full body of literature around telebehavioral health.
- **ISSUED** industry-wide declaration of parity principles endorsed by all ABHW members in support of the 10th anniversary of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA).
- **ACHIEVED** record-breaking year for the Stamp Out Stigma public health campaign.
- **HOSTED** Inaugural ABHW Behavioral Health Policy Summit in Washington, DC.



Advancing Health Care Policy
for Mental Health and Addiction

AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE ISSUES THAT MATTER

■ PRIVACY

Aligning for Better Care

As founder and Chair of the Partnership to Amend 42 CFR Part 2, a coalition of nearly 50 organizations across the health care spectrum, **ABHW spearheaded the conversation around aligning the substance use disorder (SUD) privacy regulations—42 CFR Part 2 (Part 2)—with HIPAA** for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations to ensure coordinated care and patient safety. ABHW successfully:

- Championed Part 2 reform legislation—H.R. 6082, the Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety (OPPS) Act—through the U.S. House of Representatives. It passed by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 357-57.
- Led negotiations on Part 2 reform legislation in the U.S. Senate.
- Served as a subject matter expert on Part 2 for the health care industry and worked closely with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) leadership.
- Led a public affairs campaign that strategically leveraged traditional and digital media, grassroots, and educational initiatives to influence policy outcomes.

■ THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Partnering for Solutions

ABHW worked with Congress, federal agencies, coalitions, and associations to enact and improve policies that address the nation's opioid crisis.

ABHW advocated to include the following provisions in the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act:

- Partially repealing the Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion.
- Improving data sharing in prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs).
- Providing technical assistance and support for peer services.
- Developing best practices for displaying SUD treatment information in electronic health records.
- Expanding the use of telehealth services for the treatment of opioid use disorder and other SUDs.

■ TELEHEALTH

Improving Access

Telehealth services expand access, improve outcomes, reduce inappropriate use of psychotropic medications, overcome stigma, and cut costs. In 2018, **ABHW advocated for increased access to telehealth services by:**

- Publishing a white paper, “Telebehavioral Health Care: A Solution to Impact Cost, Access, and Quality of Care,” to educate key stakeholders about the value of making telebehavioral health more easily accessible for patients. The paper provides rich evidence of telebehavioral health's positive impact.
- Influencing legislation and regulations that achieved many of our goals, including the elimination of Medicare barriers to telehealth services in Medicare Advantage plans.

TALK ABOUT IT.

STAMP
OUT
STIGMA

STAMP OUT STIGMA

An initiative spearheaded by ABHW to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness and SUDs, **Stamp Out Stigma aims to transform the dialogue on mental health and addiction from a whisper to a conversation.** In 2018, Stamp out Stigma:

- Achieved a 55% increase in Twitter followers, exceeding our 20% year-end goal.
- Partnered with Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation, SAMHSA, The Mighty, Mental Health America, This is My Brave, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and other influential organizations as part of an ongoing monthly Twitter chat series.
- Garnered 93M Twitter impressions during Mental Health Awareness Month, up from 19M in 2017.



■ MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION PARITY

Working for Accurate and Uniform Interpretation of the Law

On October 3, 2018, the 10th anniversary of MHPAEA, ABHW issued a declaration of support for, and further commitment to, creating parity in behavioral health treatment and coverage.

In 2018, **ABHW and its members continued to work on MHPAEA's implementation, interpretation, and enforcement** by:

- Issuing comment letters, lobbying federal agencies, and organizing a small coalition of like-minded trade associations to advocate for changes to federal guidance.
- Partnering with a National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) working group to insert ABHW-recommended language in a NAIC parity guidance document and data collection tool.
- Assisting a new accreditation organization in the development of a parity accreditation that enables health plans to demonstrate their compliance with MHPAEA.

■ FRAUD

Sounding the Alarm

The rise in the need for SUD treatment, combined with the increase in insurance coverage of treatment, has unfortunately led to an escalation of fraudulent recovery housing/sober homes.

ABHW worked to bring these problems to the attention of Congress, federal agencies, and others. Congress subsequently investigated and **passed legislation requiring the development and dissemination of best practices for operating recovery housing and the identification of fraudulent housing operators.**

WHAT WE DO



EDUCATE

federal policy makers, associations, accreditation agencies, and the media on the value and effectiveness of behavioral health services provided by health plans.



ADVOCATE

for policies that ensure health plans can continue to effectively increase quality, manage costs, and improve health care outcomes.



PROMOTE

quality health care delivery that strives to achieve recovery, wellness, and a productive workforce.



COLLABORATE

within the industry and with key stakeholders to exchange ideas and offer creative solutions to ongoing and emerging challenges.

ABHW MEMBERS

ABHW members include top national and regional health plans that provide coverage to more than 200 million people in both the public and private sectors.

Our member companies bring substantial knowledge and experience in mental health and substance use disorders, integration, and patient-centered treatment and recovery, and lead the industry in preventative and collaborative models of care.

Aetna
Behavioral Health

AmeriHealth
Caritas

Anthem

Beacon
Health Options

Centene
Corporation

Cigna

Magellan Health
(New member, 2018)

New Directions
Behavioral Health

Optum

Building on the successes of 2018, I am filled with optimism and excitement for the positive future contributions we can make in the lives of those suffering from mental health and substance use disorders.

— PAMELA GREENBERG, MPP
PRESIDENT AND CEO

