



Advancing Health Care Policy
for Mental Health and Addiction

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ABHW Submits Comments on Mental Health Parity

Washington, DC (June 25, 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, submitted comments on the Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Treasury’s (the “Departments”) “Proposed FAQs About Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Implementation and the 21st Century Cures Act Part 39” and the “Revised Draft Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) Disclosure Template.”

For the last two decades, ABHW has supported mental health and addiction parity. We chaired the Coalition for Fairness in Mental Illness Coverage (“Fairness Coalition”) and actively participated in the negotiations of the final parity bill that became law in 2008. Our member companies have worked vigorously to understand and implement MHPAEA and have teams of dozens of people working diligently to implement and provide a mental health and substance use disorder (MH/SUD) parity compliant benefit to their consumers.

While ABHW appreciates additional guidance that helps clarify the regulators’ expectations and aids our member companies in their implementation of MHPAEA, this recent set of guidance from the Departments continues a troublesome trend in that it further expands the scope of parity beyond its legislative intent. Furthermore, the Self-Compliance Tool updated by the Department of Labor incorporates new steps for parity compliance that are problematic and are intended to be implemented immediately without a comment period.

The comments ABHW filed today reflect our questions and concerns with the recent guidance and offer constructive suggestions that are intended to bring more clarity to the compliance process.

Read ABHW full comments [here](#) and [here](#).

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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.