



**Association for Behavioral
Health and Wellness**

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

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ABHW AND DIVERSE LIST OF HEALTH CARE STAKEHOLDERS WANT HIPAA STANDARD TO APPLY TO SUBSTANCE USE RECORDS

Washington, DC (April 11, 2016) – Today, the Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) submitted a comment letter to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) calling for further changes to be made to the proposed rule on the Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records, 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 2 (Part 2). In addition to its own comment letter, ABHW joined with a robust list of other stakeholders united in their support for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy standards to apply to substance use disorder records. The group, comprised of entities that represent consumers, treatment centers, providers, payers, mental health program directors, health plan associations, and technology companies urged SAMHSA to make additional changes to the Part 2 rule before issuing the final rule.

Both ABHW and the stakeholders that signed the joint letter believe that the changes in the proposed Part 2 rule do not go far enough and continue to hinder safe, effective, high quality, integrated substance use treatment. The lack of uniformity with HIPAA in the proposed rule does not reflect the current reality of our health care delivery system and does not provide a uniform standard of care between physical and mental health or between care provided in the public and private health care system.

“As our country tries to address the opioid epidemic, so too should the proposed rule. We need to reduce the barriers that are plaguing the health care system for substance use disorder patients. These barriers take the form of lack of communication, lack of information, and lack of coordination. The changes that are suggested in the comment letters we submitted today will improve the quality of care for substance use disorder patients impacted by the Part 2 proposed rule,” said Pamela Greenberg, ABHW President and CEO.

ABHW’s comment letter is available [here](#), and the comment letter from the diverse group of stakeholders is available [here](#).

The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) is the national voice for specialty behavioral health and wellness companies. ABHW member companies - Aetna Behavioral Health, Anthem, Beacon Health Options, Centene, Cigna, Humana Behavioral Health, New Directions Behavioral Health, Optum, and PerformCare - provide specialty services to treat mental health, substance use and other behaviors that impact health. ABHW supports effective federal, state and accrediting organization policies that ensure specialty behavioral health organizations (BHOs) can continue to increase quality, manage costs and promote wellness for the nearly 170 million people served by our members. For more information, please visit www.abhw.org.

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