



**Association for Behavioral  
Health and Wellness**

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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Robert Schwartz  
(202) 207-3665  
rschwartz@prismpublicaffairs.com**

## **Final Parity Rule Provides New Guidance for ABHW Members**

**Washington, DC (December 8, 2013)** – The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) issued the following statement today in response to the release of the final Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) regulations this morning.

“ABHW member companies appreciate the clarity that comes with having a final rule. We now have the guidance necessary to move forward toward full implementation,” said Pamela Greenberg, ABHW President and CEO. “Over the last few years our member companies have been implementing the interim final rule and talking with the federal regulators about areas that we felt needed more clarification.”

One element of the interim final rule, specifically related to Nonquantitative Treatment Limitations (NQTs), had raised concerns for ABHW member companies. While the interim rule had a clause allowing exceptions to be made in accordance with established clinical rationale, the exception clause has been removed from the final rule.

“We are disappointed that the exception was taken out, as we believed that there are times when it is clinically appropriate to engage in a level of review that may be different than what is done on the medical side in order to ensure people are receiving the right behavioral health treatment,” said Greenberg. “But we also understand from regulators that they believe the interim final rule contained the necessary flexibility to apply clinical rationale and, as such, an exception was not necessary in the final rule. We will be examining the final rule closely in order to determine whether such flexibility is allowed.”

ABHW member companies have supported mental health and addiction parity since the mid-90s. We were an original member of the Coalition for Fairness in Mental Illness Coverage (“Fairness Coalition”), which was developed to win equitable coverage of mental health and addiction treatment through the enactment of federal mental health parity legislation, and at the time the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) became law ABHW was the Chair of the Fairness Coalition.



**Association for Behavioral  
Health and Wellness**

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

*The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW) is the national voice for specialty behavioral health and wellness companies. ABHW member companies 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 125 million people served by our members. For more information, please visit [www.abhw.org](http://www.abhw.org).*

###