

**To:** Members, AHA's Section for Psychiatric & Substance Abuse Services  
**From:** Rebecca Chickey, Director, Section for Psychiatric & Substance Abuse Services  
**Subject:** Update on Key Issues in the Behavioral Health Care Field: [October 2016](#)

#### **AHA Advocacy Update**

Bill to Combat Deadly Synthetic Drugs: The House of Representatives recently voted 258-101 to pass the [Synthetic Drug Control Act \(H.R. 3537\)](#). The AHA-[supported](#) legislation would give the Drug Enforcement Administration authority to stop the distribution, sale and use of additional synthetic drugs by classifying them as Schedule I controlled substances.

Urge Senate to Act on Mental Health Legislation: Congressman Tim Murphy (R-PA) and Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) led a [bipartisan effort](#) urging the U.S. Senate to take action on the most transformational mental health reform bill in half a century, AHA-[supported](#) bill [H.R. 2646](#), the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act. The House passed Congressman Murphy's bill in July.

House Passes Mental Health First Aid Act: A program to train first responders, law enforcement and teachers to assist anyone in a mental health crisis would be extended through 2021 under a House bill [H.R. 1877](#) approved on Sept. 26. The bill would authorize roughly \$15 million per year for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA's) mental health training program from 2017 to 2021. The Senate passed a similar bill (S. 1893) in January.

42CFR Part 2: As a member of the [42CFR Part 2 Coalition](#), AHA and NAPHS recently co-hosted a Hill Briefing on the barriers 42CFR creates. The hospital perspective was presented by Dr. Alisa Busch of McLean Hospital (Partners Health), MA. The original Murphy mental health reform bill (HR 2646) would have amended the statute to allow the exchange of information within integrated health care systems. Neither HR 2646 as passed, nor the current Senate mental health bill (S 2680), makes changes to 42CFR.

President Signs Government Funding Bill: President Obama today signed [legislation](#) funding federal programs through Dec. 9. The law provides \$1.1 billion in emergency funding for the Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies to combat Zika and included \$7 million in appropriations to implement [AHA supported](#) measures in the [CARA](#) legislation combating the opioid epidemic.

#### **AHA Regulatory Update**

AHA Urges CMS to Delay Site-Neutral Policy: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) should delay implementing the site-neutral provisions of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 until it can provide fair and equitable payment to hospitals for non-excepted services, AHA [told](#) the agency, commenting on the hospital outpatient prospective payment system proposed rule for calendar year 2017. Among other changes to the proposed rule, AHA recommends that new hospital-based partial hospitalization programs (PHPs) that open on or after Nov. 2, 2015, as well as excepted PHPs that relocate or expand, be permitted to continue to bill under OPSS at the hospital-based PHP rate.

Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule for 2017: AHA [supports](#) a number of proposals in the CMS physician fee schedule proposed rule that would expand Medicare beneficiaries' access to vital services. These include the addition of new telehealth services for Medicare beneficiaries in rural areas, coverage for new primary care, and care management and behavioral health integration services.

Reporting Requirements for New Rule Expanding MAT: SAMHSA has issued a [final rule outlining the reporting requirements](#) for practitioners who are authorized to provide Medication Assisted Treatment in an office-based setting at the new patient limit of 275. The final rule will require practitioners to provide information on their annual caseload of patients by month, the number of patients provided behavioral health services and referred to behavioral health services, and the features of the practitioner's diversion control plan. The reporting requirements become effective October 27.

Senate Leaders Urge CMS to Reconsider IMD Demo: Acting CMS Administrator Andrew Slavitt recently received a [letter](#) from Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD), Pat Toomey (R-PA), and Susan Collins (R-ME), urging him to reconsider a recent agency decision -- that basically suspended the Medicaid Emergency Psychiatric Demonstration -- until states have an opportunity to submit all necessary data. These senators sponsored S.599 which became law on December 11, 2015. The law further extended the demo through December 2019, if the demonstration is cost-beneficial or cost-neutral in a given state.

### **AHA Resources**

Triple Aim Strategies to Improve Behavioral Health Care Infographic: A [new infographic](#) from HPOE provides an overview of the action steps needed to develop a well-coordinated, accessible, affordable and accountable system for delivering behavioral health care. Read the full HPOE guide [Triple Aim Strategies to Improve Behavioral Health Care](#).

### AHA Members Only Webinars

- **October 5, 2:00 ET -- *The Opioid Addiction Crisis: A Community's Effective Response***. Mark Merrill, President & CEO, Valley Health System, Winchester, Va., and colleagues, will describe how a Northern Shenandoah Valley community coalition developed strategies to effectively respond to and impact heroin and opiate abuse in a rural Virginia community. To register, [click here](#).
- **October 11, 3:00 ET -- *Improving Behavioral Health Margins and Making the Parity Law Work for Patients & Providers: Princeton House Behavioral Health***. Richard Wohl, M.S.W., M.B.A., President, and Marguerite Pedley, Ph.D., Princeton House Behavioral Health, Princeton, N.J., will address the culture and processes that have reduced bad debt to 3 percent. To register, [click here](#).
- **October 26, 3:00 ET -- *Memorial Healthcare: Reducing Infants Born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome***. Zeff Ross, Executive Vice President, Memorial Healthcare, and CEO, Memorial Regional Hospital, Hollywood, Fla., and colleagues, will describe Memorial's life-saving program that treats the youngest victims of the state's drug epidemic before they are even born. To register, [click here](#).

The [October Behavioral Health](#) Update includes information on: the [Final Rule](#) on Medication-Assisted Treatment Reporting Requirements; the *TRICARE: Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment final rule*; a (SAMHSA) "Short Report" titled [Patients with Drug-Related Emergency Department Visits Involving Suicide Attempts Who Left Against Medical Advice](#); a printable version of the 915-page [National Directory of Mental Health Treatment Facilities 2016](#); and more.

Many thanks to member hospitals who are offering depression screenings in honor of the October 6<sup>th</sup> [National Depression Screening Day](#). A [toolkit](#) with social posts and images that can be used to promote the event is available online.

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