

**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: [June 2017](#)

### **AHA Advocacy Update**

**House Passes AHCA:** AHA expressed deep disappointment in the House passage of the American Health Care Act – legislation to repeal and replace parts of the Affordable Care Act – as it will jeopardize health coverage for millions of Americans. View a summary of the AHCA, as passed, and other resources on our special members-only webpage. Now, the AHCA and the debate over ACA repeal and replacement moves to the Senate. The Congressional Budget Office found that the AHCA would leave 23 million additional people uninsured in 10 years and cut \$834 billion from the Medicaid program. Your voice and advocacy will be critical in the coming days and weeks. In a recent AHA Federal Update Podcast, President and CEO Rick Pollack reviews what's at stake as work is underway in the Senate on legislation to repeal and replace parts of the Affordable Care Act.

**The Medicaid Coverage for Addiction Recovery Expansion Act:** [S. 1169](#) would allow substance abuse treatment centers with up to 40 beds to be reimbursed by Medicaid for up to 60 consecutive days. The proposal, introduced by Sens. [Rob Portman](#) (R-Ohio), [Shelley Moore Capito](#) (R-W.Va.) and [Dick Durbin](#) (D-Ill.), would dial back a decades-old law prohibiting Medicaid from paying for patient care at facilities with more than 16 beds. AHA supports targeted exceptions to the IMD for hospital and residential treatment, and we will continue to work with Congress and the Administration on these IMD reforms.

**Bill to Repeal 190-day Lifetime Limit:** Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY) introduced H.R. 2509, the [Medicare Mental Health Inpatient Equity Act of 2017](#). H.R. 2509 would permanently repeal the Medicare 190-day lifetime limit for inpatient psychiatric care. "These types of arbitrary caps are a thing of the past in private health insurance thanks to the passage of the *Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act* and the *Affordable Care Act*. It's time for Medicare to do the same," [said](#) Rep. Tonko. Repealing the 190-day lifetime limit has long been supported by the AHA.

**FY 2018 Budget Request:** President Trump's budget request for fiscal year 2018 proposes steep reductions to the Medicaid program – 627 billion over 10 years – but does not propose any direct reductions to Medicare funding. The request also would reduce funding for the National Institute of Mental Health and National Institute on Drug Abuse by more than \$500 million combined. The blueprint also zeroes out funding for the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training program or the Primary and Behavioral Healthcare Integration program. [AHA's Special Bulletin](#) provides more detail.

**Adding 15,000 Medicare-funded Residency Positions:** Reps. Joseph Crowley (D-N.Y.) and Ryan Costello (R-Pa.) introduced [AHA-supported](#) legislation to add 15,000 Medicare-funded residency positions to alleviate physician shortages that threaten patients' access to care. The Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act ([H.R. 2267](#)) prioritizes teaching hospitals that are currently training residents in excess of their cap, those in states with newly opened medical schools and those that emphasize training physicians in community-based or outpatient hospital settings. At least half of the new slots would be for specialty residency programs with shortages.

### **AHA Regulatory Update**

**Medicare Outpatient Observation Notice:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently posted [frequently asked questions](#) on the Medicare Outpatient Observation Notice

(MOON). The MOON is a standardized notice to inform Medicare beneficiaries when they are outpatients receiving observation services and are not inpatients of a hospital or critical access hospital. Hospitals were required to begin using the MOON by March 8, 2017.

Opioid Commission: President Trump named New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie to chair his Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis. The president also recently named to the bipartisan commission NC Gov. Roy Cooper; MA Gov. Charlie Baker; former U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy of RI; and Bertha Madras, a former deputy director in the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Established by executive order, the commission will recommend improvements to the federal response to the crisis.

## **AHA Resources**

June 9: Support #HAVHope Friday to End Violence: CDC estimates that more than 2.3 million people are treated in U.S. emergency departments each year for violent injuries. Hospitals and health systems are committed to helping their employees, patients and communities address violence in whatever form it may take, and the June 9 #HAVhope Day of Awareness gives voice to these efforts.

Virtual Behavioral Health Services: In a May AHA Chairman's File, Gene Woods, AHA Chair and CEO, Carolinas HealthCare System describes their behavioral health integration program. It uses a virtual model that provides timely access, expands services and reaches more primary care patients.

MACRA Technical Assistance Resources: Check out the new guide summarizing technical assistance resources available to clinicians participating in the new payment system under the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act. For more on MACRA, visit [qpp.cms.gov](http://qpp.cms.gov) and [www.aha.org/MACRA](http://www.aha.org/MACRA).

New AHA Communication Vehicle: On May 31, we unveiled the inaugural edition of *AHA Today*, replacing *AHA News Now* and *H&HN Daily*, and combining the best of both. Add [circulation@aha.org](mailto:circulation@aha.org) to your address book to ensure delivery. Questions or comments? Call 1-800-424-4301.

On Guard for Cyber Attacks: The recent worldwide ransomware attack proves just how important cybersecurity is for hospitals. The AHA worked closely with HHS, as well as the White House, the FBI and the FDA in response to this cyberattack to provide our members with the latest information to stay safe. For the latest guidance visit our cybersecurity webpage at [www.aha.org/cybersecurity](http://www.aha.org/cybersecurity).

Upcoming Webinar: *Using Telephonic Case Management to Treat Homebound Adults with Physical & Mental Disorders – Montefiore Medical Center, Bronx, N.Y.*, Tuesday, June 27, 2017, 2:00 – 3:00 pm ET. Learn how case management, home care and psychiatry can collaborate to maintain homebound older adults safely in the community. Speakers will share the cost and replicability of this work, and encourage discussion particularly on how TCM improved outcomes and reduces cost of care. To register, [click here](#).

The [June Behavioral Health Update](#) includes information on: The members and purpose of the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis; A Joint Commission FAQ on Ligature Risks – Assessing and Mitigating Risk for Suicide and Self-Harm; the results of an NIMH-funded study showing that emergency departments can reduce suicide attempts; and more. [Click here](#) for more AHA resources on behavioral health.

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