



Section for Psychiatric & Substance Abuse Services

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: [November 2017](#)

AHA Advocacy Update

House Members Testify at Hearing on Opioids ... The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health Oct. 11 heard testimony from more than 50 members of Congress on ways to combat the nationwide opioid epidemic. The [hearing](#) is the latest in a series to examine the issue, including [state efforts](#) to combat the crisis. AHA's [recommendations](#) to E&C for the federal response to the opioid crisis were very similar to our [statement](#) submitted earlier to the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee. AHA continues to support eliminating the Medicaid Institutions for Mental Disease exclusion for adults under age 65 as an important step to improve access to treatment.

Budget ... The House of Representatives Oct. 26 voted 216-212 to approve the Senate's fiscal 2018 [budget resolution](#), which is designed to provide budget reconciliation protection for a tax code overhaul. The resolution does not require entitlement cuts or contain instructions to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

CSRs ... Congress continues to explore legislative options that would provide short-term funding for the Cost Sharing Reductions. See the latest on the bipartisan [bill](#) from Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Patty Murray (D-WA), as well as a [proposal](#) from Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Kevin Brady (R-TX).

Residency Slots ... Urge your legislators to cosponsor the S. 1301/H.R. 2267, to increase physician residency slots at teaching hospitals. **See our [Action Alert](#) for more details.**

Must Delay DSH Cuts ... The AHA is committed to work with Congress to stop the Medicaid DSH cuts and thanks the 221 members of the House of Representatives who [urged](#) Congress to delay cuts to hospitals that serve a disproportionate share of Medicaid and uninsured.

Open Enrollment ... Will be shorter this year and only run from November 1 to December 15 in most states. It's important to help consumers understand the timeline for enrollment and the options available to them. [Click here](#) to learn what you need to know as you engage with members of your community.

AHA Regulatory Update

340B ... The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has [announced](#) it will drastically cut Medicare payment for drugs that are acquired under the 340B Drug Pricing Program. Specifically, CMS will pay separately payable, non pass-through drugs (other than vaccines) purchased through the 340B program at a rate of the average sales price minus 22.5%, rather than ASP plus 6%. AHA is deeply disappointed in the [decision to cut payments](#) and will join the Association of American Medical Colleges, & America's Essential Hospitals to pursue litigation to prevent these cuts to 340B drugs.

Ligature Update ... Joint Commission has issued [guidance](#) to help hospitals and surveyors determine what constitutes **adequate environmental safeguards** to protect patients with suicidal ideation from self-harm. Developed by an expert panel, the guidance addresses only the most debated and contentious issues related to environmental hazards in inpatient psychiatric units, general medical-surgical inpatient settings and emergency departments. The Joint Commission will add additional information once available.

HIPAA & Opioids ... The Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office for Civil Rights released [guidance](#) clarifying how health care providers can share health information with a patient's family members, friends and legal representatives in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) when the patient may be in crisis and incapacitated, such as during an opioid

overdose. "Our clarifying guidance will give medical professionals increased confidence in their ability to cooperate with friends and family members to help save lives," [said](#) OCR Director Roger Severino.

Extension on IPF Measure ... CMS is providing facilities with a report on their *30-Day All-Cause Unplanned Readmission Following Psychiatric Hospitalization in an Inpatient Psychiatric Facility* (IPF) measure results and has extended the Q&A period thru, Nov. 24. For more information, visit the [Inpatient Psychiatric Facilities Measures](#) page and submit questions to PQM@hsag.com.

Regulatory Relief ... An AHA [report](#) found hospitals, health systems and post-acute care providers spend nearly \$39 billion a year on administrative activities related to regulatory compliance, diverting providers and resources away from patient care. AHA President and CEO Rick Pollack [participated](#) in a stakeholder listening session hosted by CMS Administrator Seema Verma to launch the agency's regulatory relief effort, and he shared [AHA's priorities](#) with the agency. Visit <http://www.aha.org/regrelief> for more info.

A National Public Health Emergency ... President Trump [declared](#) the **opioid epidemic** a national public health emergency under federal law, directing executive agencies to use every appropriate emergency authority to fight the crisis. This action reaffirms [the role](#) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as leaders in supporting prevention, and providing treatment and recovery services.

Disaster Update

The California Hospital Association and the CA Regional Associations have established the [Hospital Workers' Fire Relief Fund](#) to help the more than 100 hospital employees made homeless by the horrific fires. Contributions are still being accepted to help hospital employees in [Puerto Rico](#), [Texas](#) and [Florida](#).

AHA Resources

Stem the Tide: Addressing the Opioid Epidemic ... To advance the efforts of hospitals and health systems working to address the opioid crisis, the AHA developed a [new toolkit](#) for working with patients, clinicians and communities to stem this epidemic. This resource was created with input from psychiatrists specializing in addictions, CMOs, pain management professionals and a range of stakeholders. Additional resources are available at: [Addressing the Opioid Epidemic](#).

High-Need, High-Cost Patients ... [Improving Care for High-Need, High-Cost Patients](#) is a new AHA report, on how hospitals and health systems are leading interventions for high-need, high cost patients. These patients often have three or more chronic diseases, including psychiatric and addiction disorders and have functional limitations in their ability to care for themselves or perform routine daily tasks, and who drive the reform of payment and delivery systems.

AHA Members Only Webinar: *Depression Screening of all Patients – Provides Comprehensive Care and Better Outcomes.* Please [register](#) for the Dec. 13, 3:00-4:00 CT webinar to learn the impact of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center's seamless depression screening and evaluation done for all inpatients.

Hospitals Focus on Behavioral Health, Enhance Value ... AHA's [2018 Environmental Scan](#) has prepared insights into what will help hospital leaders navigate change in the year ahead.

The [November Behavioral Health Update](#) includes information on: CMS [100 frequently asked questions](#) on the survey process for Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities and [FAQs](#) on the Parity Rule & Medicaid/CHIP; AHA [Webinar](#) on Improving Care for Hospitalized Adults with Substance Use Disorder; and more. [Click here](#) to access other resources for behavioral health leaders.

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