

MEMBERS

American Psychological
Association

Association for Behavioral
Health and Wellness

Centerstone

Jewish Federations
of North America

Mental Health America

National Alliance
on Mental Illness

National Association of Counties

National Association of County
Behavioral Health Directors

National Association of
Psychiatric Health Systems

National Association of State
Alcohol/Drug Abuse Directors

National Association
of Social Workers

National Council for
Behavioral Health

Netsmart

BREAKING DOWN THE SILOS: THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IT COALITION URGES THE SENATE TO TAKE UP MENTAL HEALTH REFORM

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

WASHINGTON, DC- SEPTEMBER 12, 2016 – The Behavioral Health Information Technology Coalition – comprised of providers, patient advocates, vendors and public authorities – strongly urges the U.S. Senate to take up the Alexander/Murray Mental Health Reform Act (S. 2680).

While the Alexander/Murray measure contains many important provisions moving mental health care forward, Senate action also affords the opportunity to consider the Integrating Behavioral Health Through Technology Act (S. 2691), introduced by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI).

Despite broad bipartisan Congressional consensus that behavioral health needs to be more closely integrated into the larger American health care system, it is clear that silos remain. In the last 6 months alone, the respected journal *Health Affairs* has published at least four articles showing that various Medicare Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) have struggled to incorporate mental health and addiction providers into shared savings models. These challenges are occurring despite overwhelming clinical evidence that people with mental illness and substance use disorders use more health care services and have far worse outcomes than those without behavioral health disorders.

S. 2691 advances much-needed integration by authorizing a five-state pilot program that provides health IT incentives to psychiatric hospitals, Community Mental Health Centers, psychologists, clinical social workers, and outpatient/inpatient addiction providers.

The following organizations thank you for your support: American Psychological Association, The Jewish Federations of North America, National Association of Social Workers, Netsmart, Centerstone, National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems, the National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors, and Mental Health America.

The Behavioral Health Information Technology Coalition is the unifying voice of America's mental health and IT providers comprised of organizations and companies such as American Psychological Association (APA), Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness, Centerstone, The Jewish Federations of North America, Mental Health America, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Association of Counties, National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors, National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems, National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, National Association of Social Workers, National Council for Behavioral Health, and Netsmart. Visit the BHIT Coalition website at www.bhitcoalition.org.

Contact: Sarah Zakrewski at szakrewski@guidelobby.com / 202-808-8857

###