



NACBH

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health

NEWS

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PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

Breaking News: Federal Appeals Court Rules on ACA Case



Late Wednesday afternoon, a three-judge panel of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) individual mandate is unconstitutional. Their decision did not address which other parts of the law could continue, sending the case back to a federal district court in

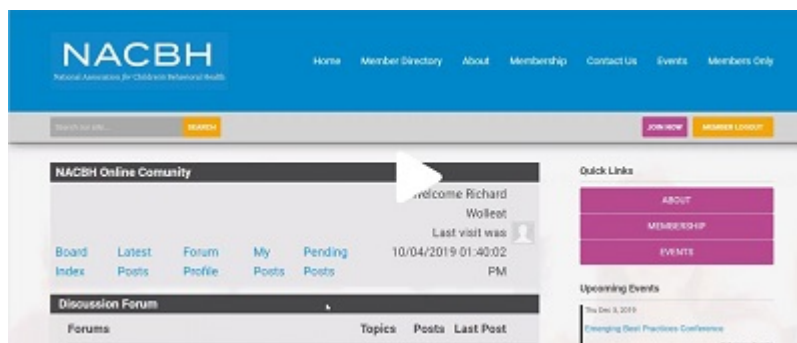
Texas. The lower court's opinion had discussed the individual mandate's interaction with other provisions, such as coverage of pre-existing conditions, but the 5th Circuit indicated that more thorough analysis is needed to explain why particular parts cannot stand without the individual mandate.

As part of the 2017 tax reform law, Congress eliminated the tax penalty for individuals who do not obtain health insurance, so the immediate effect of the appeals court decision may be limited. It is likely that the ACA is headed back to the Supreme Court at some point, and will figure more prominently in political campaigns in the interim.

Join the conversation on the NACBH Online Community!

What provisions concern you most if the ACA is ultimately struck down?

View the video below to learn how to find the community and [share your thoughts today](#).



Slowly, Then Suddenly: FY 2020 Appropriations - Including Family First Transition Act

Just before Thanksgiving, House and Senate Appropriations Committee chairs reached agreement on subcommittee allocations, then left town with fingers crossed that more than 100 outstanding policy and procedural disputes could be resolved before federal funding expires December 20. And they have been!

As of this writing on Wednesday, the House has passed all 12 appropriations bills for the remainder of the fiscal year. The Senate is expected to pass them as well, and send them on to the President for his expected signature before midnight Friday. [Read more on what is included in the FY 2020 appropriations, including the Family First Transition Act.](#)

Timely Billing Legislation



Among many interesting legislative proposals with uncertain prospects, NACBH has been watching S. 1895, the [Lower Health Care Costs Act](#), and signing on to coalition letters informing its sponsors of problematic aspects. Introduced in June and reported out of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee in July, it unexpectedly surfaced in eleventh-hour appropriations horse trading and appeared likely to be included. Luckily, it didn't make the cut in its present form, and we have time to gather your feedback before it comes up again next year. [Continue reading](#) and let [Pat Johnston](#) know if you have any concerns about this bill or can offer some consultation about whether and how your organization could be affected.

Parity: New Report Documents Worsening Disparities in Access to Behavioral Health Care in Employer-Sponsored Health Plans

Last month, the actuarial firm Milliman issued a [report](#) revealing an increase in disparities in behavioral health care in employer-sponsored plans since a similar [study](#) two years ago. *Addiction and Mental Health vs. Physical Health: Widening Disparities in Network Use and Provider Reimbursement* is based on actual claims data for approximately 37 million employees and dependents across the country, for the years 2013 through 2017. [Read more](#) about some of the key findings.

Parity: GAO Issues Report on State and Federal Oversight

On December 13, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released *Mental Health and Substance Use: State and Federal Oversight of Compliance with Parity Requirements Varies*, as required by the 21st Century Cures Act. [The report](#) examines how relevant agencies oversee compliance with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) and describes what is known about the extent of compliance. [Continue reading](#) about the report.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Request for Information: Quick Turnaround: NIMH Strategic Plan for Research

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has issued a draft strategic plan for research to accelerate progress in basic, translational, and clinical science. The last five-year plan was published in 2015, and NIMH is looking ahead to the next five years. High-level goals for the 2020 plan are to:

- . Define the brain mechanisms underlying complex behaviors
- . Examine mental illness trajectories across the lifespan
- . Strive for prevention and cures
- . Strengthen the public health impact of NIMH-supported research

NACBH members are encouraged to review the [draft strategic plan](#) and [submit your feedback](#) by the **January 1, 2020** deadline.

Request for Information: Priority Topics for the Community Preventive Services Task Force

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a [request](#) for recommendations to update the list of priority topics for the Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF). Last updated in 2015, the current list of 12 includes mental health, substance abuse,



violence prevention, and social determinants of health. NACBH members are encouraged to respond to the request by the **January 23, 2020** deadline, to help make the CPSTF's work most responsive to your communities' population health needs. Please let [Pat Johnston](#) know if you'd like NACBH to submit particular

recommendations.

Call for Nominations: Federal Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee

The Department of Health and Human Services is seeking [nominations](#) of non-federal public members of the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC). The IACC is a federal advisory committee that provides information to the HHS Secretary regarding federal activities related to autism spectrum disorder (ASD), facilitates coordination of ASD activities among the participating agencies and organizations, and provides a public forum for discussion related to ASD research and services. [Continue reading](#)

Free Online Training Modules



New topics have been added to SOAR Online, a series of CE/CME training modules designed to educate health providers and professionals on how to identify, treat and respond appropriately to trafficked and at-risk individuals. Modules take between 30 and 60 minutes to complete, and credits are available to different professionals

according to the topic. Topics include:

- . Health and Wellness
- . Trauma-Informed Care
- . Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services
- . Behavioral Health
- . Public Health
- . Health Care
- . Social Services
- . School-Based Professionals (no credit available)
- . Native Communities (no credit available)

More information is available at

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/training/soar-to-health-and-wellness-training/soar-online>.

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