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Rep. Tim Murphy reintroduced a mental health bill today that would include behavioral health providers and the places they work in the meaningful use electronic health records program.

The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act would expand meaningful use payments to psychiatric hospitals, psychologists, community health centers and substance abuse facilities that invest in EHRs.

The Behavioral Health Information Technology Coalition applauded the bill, saying it could save money by reducing adverse drug reactions and emergency room visits for more than 8 million Americans with mental health issues. Two thirds of the mentally ill have other chronic illnesses and they account for disproportionate amounts of health care spending.

“Coordinated care — made possible in part by Electronic Health Records (EHRs) — can improve their quality of life and lower healthcare costs,” said Kevin Scalia of Netsmart in a statement.

The addition of mental health and addiction providers to meaningful use has been held up in part by legal restrictions on sharing the data of their patients.

— *POLITICO Pro staff*