

Pharmacy Benefit Managers Descend on the Capitol: Here Are the Real Questions

Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) will be visiting your offices this week. They will be spinning the benefits of mail order pharmacy and try to convince you that they help to lower drug costs. We would like to provide you with some key questions to ask during your meetings in order to uncover the truth behind PBM theories:



1. Why Not More PBM Transparency: Many constituents have stated that they want a PBM that is legally required to act within the best interests of their patients. Requiring PBMs to act as fully transparent fiduciary agents to health plans is one way to lower costs. Consumer groups, state attorneys general and others agree that patients should have more information before making important decisions about prescription drug plans. Why have PBMs fought so hard at the state level against such legislation?

2. Are PBMs Paying Their Mail Order Pharmacy More Than Community Pharmacists: Americans want to know they are getting the best prices on prescription drugs. Is your company willing to fully disclose to health plans, in a confidential manner, the prices the PBM pays directly to retail and mail order pharmacies on prescription drugs, so that consumers and plan sponsors can verify that mail order pharmacies are matching the low prices PBMs pay to independent community pharmacies?

3. Are PBMs Switching Patients So They Can Grab Larger Rebates: Constituents are frustrated by the pharmaceutical manufacturers' policy to offer prices to mail order pharmacies not available to retail pharmacies in order to influence formulary decisions by the PBM. Will your company fully disclose in a confidential manner all payments, price concessions, and all other payments between pharmaceutical manufacturers to your company and mail order pharmacy, so that consumers and plan sponsors can verify that health decisions are made with the best interest of the patient and not to maximize profit?

4. Why Have PBMs Paid Over \$370 Million In Fines And Damages: Patients I talk to overwhelmingly prefer their local pharmacist when given equal prices and copayments. Substantial enforcement actions against each of the major PBMs, indicating fraudulent and deceptive conduct, have resulted in over \$370 million in damages. If a state and federal licensed pharmacy is willing to accept the same reimbursement as other pharmacies within your company's network, will you protect the patient's right to use that pharmacy? Does your company stifle competition by using copayment differentials or other financial incentives to steer patients away these pharmacies?

5. Do Rural Patients Want To Get Counsel from a Mail Man: In many areas of the country, particularly rural areas, we hear that access to prescription drugs can be a challenge. Local pharmacists are often on the front lines of health care delivery in these communities, with long-standing relationships with patients especially for seniors. These patients frequently need face to face counseling from a pharmacist. Shouldn't their choice of pharmacy be protected to ensure better health outcomes?

Thank you again. Please contact NCPA Government Affairs at (703) 683-8200 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

John M. Coster, Ph.D., R.Ph.
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs
National Community Pharmacists Association
100 Daingerfield Ave
Alexandria, VA 22314

T: 703-683-8200

John.Coster@ncpanet.org