

Louisiana Medicaid Team,

Thank you for taking the time to consider public comments for the upcoming Louisiana Medicaid RFP.

When you are crafting the new RPF, please consider adding language that allows the state to leverage the power of community pharmacy in ways that have proven successful in other states.

In the last RFP there were at least 61 quality measures defined by the state. The next RFP will undoubtedly contain a similar amount, if not more quality measures. By asking the managed care plans to utilize a network of pharmacies that provide enhanced services to achieve those goals it will be possible to help drive down the total cost of care by decreasing hospitalizations and emergency room visits for Medicaid patients in Louisiana.

Below are several reasons we believe this to be true:

- High touch - Independent pharmacists are willing and able to perform clinical services and interact with patients at a level not found in chain pharmacies.
- Low barrier to entry - Pharmacists are the most easily accessible healthcare professional. They possess the skills necessary to triage the non-emergent needs of individual complex patients (within specific service sets). By utilizing skilled pharmacists it will reduce the burden on physicians and improve healthcare data collection for better outcomes.
- Frequency of visits - Complex patients, on average, see their pharmacist 35 times per year. They will only see their primary care physician 3.5 times per year. Pharmacists can use each of those touch points to educate and collect data to fill in the gaps between doctor visits.
- Medication management - One of the largest barriers to improving the quality of healthcare is the misuse, underuse, and overuse of medications. Optimal medication use has been proven to reduce the total cost of care. Pharmacies engaged in enhanced services are committed to not merely reviewing medication regimens but managing them. Enhanced service network pharmacies leverage frequent interactions with patients that occur in community pharmacies. Seeing a patient an average of 30+ times per year allows pharmacists to perform ongoing assessments of medication therapies with patients. Collaborating with other healthcare providers, monthly or weekly follow ups with complex, chronically ill or non-adherent patients and positive resolution of drug therapy problems distinguish enhanced service pharmacies from those that only perform yearly medication therapy reviews.
- Reduced hospital admissions - The end result of increased pharmacist and patient interaction and appropriate medication management distills down to reduced hospital admissions. If patients are taking their medication and being monitored at a high frequency they are much less likely to visit the hospital.
- Aligned goals - Pharmacies are looking for new models as well. The current market landscape is a "race to the bottom" with a heavy focus on reimbursement. Pharmacies are working to reduce healthcare costs, but they often stand on an island. Bringing the pharmacy into the circle of care for a patient benefits everyone from the patient to the physician to the payer.

Attached you will find an example of how integrated community pharmacy medication use support services could be implemented as well as two white papers that back up the value community pharmacy brings to the equation when leveraged outside of traditional pharmacy PBM relationships.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these comments and if there are any questions please do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you,

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