

November 8, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

By any measure, opioid abuse in the United States has reached crisis proportions. The number of opioid prescriptions has nearly tripled from 76 million in 1991 to approximately 207 million in 2013. The U.S. accounts for 80 percent of the world's consumption of opioid painkillers and 99 percent of the hydrocodone. This remarkable volume is severely harming consumer health, costing the country more than \$78 billion annually in associated costs and taking a tragic toll on countless individuals and society as a whole.

Collaboration among prescribers, pharmacists, PBMs, health plans, government officials and patients is important in combating this crisis. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) took the important first step of putting forth its Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain. We, as pharmacy care providers, have come together to support these important guidelines so they become the standard among those who can affect meaningful change.

Pharmacists are highly accessible health care providers and trained medication experts. Through their unique position, pharmacists collaborate with prescribers and support customers who are most at risk for opioid misuse. At the same time, pharmacies, PBMs and health plans assist patients in receiving the appropriate services, beyond prescription drugs, to best address opioid use and abuse. They leverage sophisticated data and analytics and enhanced monitoring of physician prescribing.

Each of our organizations has launched programs focused on opioid abuse education and prevention. We are already seeing positive results in reducing the number of opioids prescribed and filled, resulting in reduced opportunities for misuse and abuse. Through the implementation of our programs, we have identified additional opportunities to combat the epidemic. For example, we have all developed capabilities to support electronic prescribing of controlled substances and we would encourage and pledge to work with the federal government – and all states – to mandate this practice for the benefit of patients and providers.

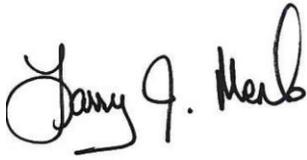
Along with this recommendation, we are pledging to further use the programs we offer and multiple touchpoints we have with consumers, pharmacists and providers across the health care system to help assure that, when it comes to treatment for pain, patients receive the right drug at the right dosage for the right period of time.

- PBMs manage opioid utilization consistent with the CDC Guideline for opioid prescribing. Utilization management offers clients programs that include seeking alternatives to opioids so that they are prescribed only when necessary; limiting new opioid prescriptions for acute pain to a 7-day supply in accordance with applicable laws and regulations; limiting the daily dosage of opioids dispensed; and implementing evidence-based requirements for the prescribing of immediate-release formulations of opioids before extended-release opioids are dispensed. Pharmacists play an important role in supporting this utilization approach by having collaborative discussions with the patient and prescriber, when necessary, to ensure an appropriate supply of medication is dispensed.
- Pharmacists and PBMs also support consumers in better managing their pain medications through clinical programs that promote proper medication use, monitor medication utilization and help prevent drug misuse and overuse.
- Pharmacies educate patients on the importance of the CDC Guideline at the point of dispensing, specifically focusing on using the lowest effective dose for the shortest duration possible. This counseling when warranted helps inform patients about the risk of dependence and addiction tied to duration of opioid use as well as the importance of proper disposal of unused medication.
- We support the disposal of unused or unwanted medications, including controlled substances, using DEA-approved methods. Examples include but are not limited to disposal at retail pharmacies through drug disposal kiosks and/or drug take-back envelopes, as well as disposal at police stations and other law enforcement locations.
- Our organizations will be supporting additional federal and state legislative and regulatory opportunities on two key issues: establishing a 7-day supply limit for initial prescriptions written for acute pain and requiring all controlled substance prescriptions to be written electronically.
- Finally, we see great benefit in community programs that offer medication-assisted treatment.

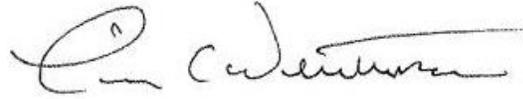
With our combined number of retail pharmacy locations and the lives covered by our respective PBMs and health plans, our joint efforts are resulting in significant changes in how opioids are prescribed, dispensed and consumed and we have the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of millions of Americans and their families.

We stand committed to engage in a public-private partnership and to work in the most collaborative fashion across the health care system to help solve the national health care crisis of opioid abuse.

Sincerely,



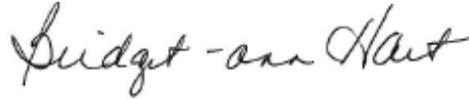
Larry J. Merlo
President and Chief Executive Officer,
CVS Health



Tim Wentworth
Chief Executive Officer and President,
Express Scripts



Randy Edeker
Chairman, CEO and President,
Hy-Vee, Inc.



Bridget-ann Hart
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Mostafa Kamal
Chief Executive Officer,
Magellan Rx Management



John Prince
Chief Executive Officer,
OptumRx



John Standley
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer,
Rite Aid Corporation



Stefano Pessina
Executive Vice Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer,
Walgreens Boots Alliance



Greg Foran,
President & Chief Executive Officer,
Walmart U.S.

cc: The Honorable Jeff Sessions, Attorney General of the United States
Richard Baum, Acting Director of National Drug Control Policy

The Honorable. Eric D. Hargan, Acting Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services
Scott Gottlieb, M.D., Commissioner, U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Brenda Fitzgerald, M.D., Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The Honorable Charles Grassley, Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chair Senate HELP Committee
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate HELP Committee
The Honorable Greg Walden, Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Robert Goodlatte, Chair, Judiciary Committee
The Honorable John Conyers, Jr, Ranking Member Judiciary Committee