



State of Louisiana
Department of Health and Hospitals
Bureau of Health Services Financing

January 3, 2014

The Honorable Scott M. Simon, Chairman
House Health and Welfare Committee
Louisiana House of Representatives
P.O. Box 4486, Capitol Station
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4486

Dear Chairman Simon,

The Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) has reviewed HR 164 and we applaud your commitment to this issue. Louisiana Medicaid, operating under the Bureau of Health Services Financing, administers the Bayou Health program. The majority of Louisiana's Medicaid and LaCHIP recipients receive health care services through Bayou Health. DHH is committed to ensuring that Bayou Health improves health outcomes for its members, and agrees with the Legislature that access to necessary prescription medications when clinically indicated is a critical component of disease management and preventive care for all persons living with HIV/AIDS or hepatitis C, or who are co-infected.

DHH has reviewed existing policy and statute. Pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statutes 46:153.3(C)(1), DHH does not restrict by prior authorization any anti-retroviral prescription drug prescribed and determined to be medically necessary for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS, and Bayou Health Plans must adhere to these provisions as well. The Prepaid Bayou Health Plans which manage their own pharmacy benefit were advised of DHH's position in May 2013 and are in compliance.

In compliance with Act 312 of the 2013 Legislative Session, DHH has verified that each Prepaid Health Plan utilizes a pharmacy and therapeutics committee. The committees are comprised of physicians, pharmacists, dentists and specialists that are responsible for evaluating the Preferred Drug List to ensure it promotes the appropriate and cost-effective use of medications. Meetings are open to the public and the dates are posted to each Health Plan website to provide adequate notification to those individuals that are interested in attending. In an effort to increase transparency, Health Plans have also placed their formularies on their websites as well.

In a continuing effort to improve patient care and pharmaceutical utilization, some drugs require prior authorization (PA) before a prescription can be filled. For hepatitis C, PAs are required because many of the medications must be used in triple therapy and as necessary will deny if one is prescribed without the other. Also for hepatitis C, when the prescription is filled, future labs are required to ensure the member is adhering to requirements.

The department does not currently collect pharmacy prior authorization data specific to hepatitis C, but is currently implementing new reporting practices effective March 1, 2014. Following six months of data collection, the department will prepare a report to assess the most effective means by which to ensure open access to hepatitis C medications by enrollees in Bayou Health.

We thank you for your attention to this issue and are committed to ensuring Louisiana patients living with these diseases receive the best care possible. I welcome the chance to meet with you anytime to discuss new strategies to accomplish our shared goals.

Sincerely,


J. Ruth Kennedy *Approved*
Medicaid Director *for*

JRK/jwh

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Health and Welfare Committee
David R. Poynter, Legislative Research Library