

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Banning of Pharmacy Benefit Management Policies that Require the Provision of Dangerous Quantities of Medications

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2020

Approved by the Assembly, April 2020

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2012

Approved by the Assembly, May 2012

“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

Issue:

Given the prevalence of suicide in our country, and specifically the prevalence of overdose on prescription medications, Pharmacy Benefit Management (PBM) policies that incentivize provision of high quantities of medications to patients are of concern to us as psychiatrists. Placing large quantities of medications in the hands of potentially suicidal patients elevates the risk of a fatal outcome should an overdose be attempted. On the other hand, many patients with depression are on stable doses of antidepressants for years and could benefit greatly from the cost savings offered by PBMs for long-term prescriptions.

APA Position:

Pharmacy Benefit Management companies should offer prescribing physicians flexibility in determining when dispensing of an entire 90-day supply of a medication is clinically dangerous, and should offer alternatives that would enable dispensing a 90-day supply in multiple shipments without financial penalty. The treating physician’s determination of the quantity of medication prescribed for the care and health of the patient should outweigh any cost considerations.