PhRMA Statement on Proposed Changes to Medicaid in Louisiana

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 12, 2012 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) Senior Vice President Matthew Bennett issued the following statement today on proposed changes to Medicaid in Louisiana:

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"Seeking new approaches to coordinate care for Medicaid and LaCHIP recipients is critically important. However, without proper protections for patients, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals' (DHH) plans could put vulnerable Medicaid patients at risk. New laws passed by the Louisiana legislature and signed by Governor Bobby Jindal in 2011 and 2012 protect patients by providing a balance between the need to address increasing budget considerations and ensuring patient safety. DHH's proposal indicates that those patient protections, which were designed to curb overzealous rationing of care under prior authorization and step therapy schemes, may be in jeopardy. PhRMA is concerned that it may leave final prescriptive authority with insurance companies rather than physicians.

"The aim of integrating benefits should be to increase patient adherence to prescribed medicines. Greater adherence to prescription regimens improves the quality of health outcomes and reduces medical costs.

"In addition to maintaining the patient safety protections approved by the legislature in 2011 and 2012, rules promulgated by DHH should include access to a range of prescription medicines, including, where available, a minimum of two brand-name treatments; guaranteed access to successful therapies at least until the time a physician is able to find another equally beneficial medication; and a transparent review system for all formulary management tools. However, it should be noted that the DHH plans are moving very rapidly, which raises additional concerns about having adequate time to ens
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