

Bill protects pharmacy customers

House Bill 351

We all need the protections provided in Florida House Bill 351 to ensure pharmacy benefit managers, or PBMs, are transparently operating with patients. Currently, PBMs are not regulated by the state and often take advantage of this lack of regulation by billing health plans more for prescription drugs than your local pharmacist even charges. This practice allows them to retain an even higher profit, also known as a 'clawback.' Even worse, they often prohibit our local pharmacists from informing us that our medications may be available at a lower price.

As executive director of an organization that began as a Florida grass-roots community organization 33 years ago, I have seen the need to keep businesses honest, transparent and fair for consumers and patients. As a leader dedicated to supporting and protecting health care access for people living with HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and patients living with chronic diseases, it is my responsibility to advocate for business practices that provide equitable access and affordable

options for those most in need.

Pharmacy benefit managers have the important role of serving as the intermediary that connects drug manufacturers, patients, their health plans and pharmacies. However, when PBMs stand to gain higher profits with their business practices, patients should not be negatively impacted with increased drug prices and restricted pharmacy access.

House Bill 351 will require pharmacy benefit managers to register with Florida's Office of Insurance Regulation, forcing them to adopt much-needed transparency of coverage information for patients. This bill does not prevent them from making a profit, but would prevent the profits from being achieved through higher pricing and limited pharmacy access for patients.

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