



April 14, 2017

The Honorable Representative Robert Jacquard and  
Members of the House Corporations Committee  
State House  
Room 206  
Providence, RI 02903  
Delivered via Email: rep-jacquard@rilegislature.gov

**Re: Opposition to House Bill. 5895 – Medication Synchronization policy changes**

Dear Members of the House Corporations Committee:

On behalf of the Pharmaceutical Care Management Association (PCMA), I am writing to you regarding house bill No. 5895. PCMA is the national association representing America's pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), which administer prescription drug plans for more than 266 million Americans with health coverage provided through Fortune 500 employers, health insurance plans, labor unions, state and federal employee- benefit plans, and Medicare. We are writing in opposition to HB 5895 because it undoes a bill passed by stakeholders during the 2016 session and puts the health of Rhode Islanders at risk.

The practice of medication synchronization allows a pharmacist, if they believe it to be in the best interest of the patient, to dispense a patient's prescription drugs on the same refill cycle. Thereafter, all new prescriptions would be filled initially on a partial basis until they are synchronized with the existing medications. This practice permits patients to consolidate and organize their prescription drugs to be dispensed on the same day throughout the year. For patients suffering from chronic illnesses, medication synchronization may be a useful tool to promote long-term medication adherence.

As such, during the 2016 session stakeholders from pharmacy benefit manager, health plan and community pharmacy groups came together to pass Senate Bill 2822 by Senator Golden, codifying standards for all medication synchronization programs in the state of Rhode Island. This bill became effective on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 and according to the American Pharmacist Association there are 109 pharmacies of all types – independent and chain – offering medication synchronization services to patients in Rhode Island.

The 2016 bill allowed pharmacies to offer medication synchronization services to patients while preserving health plan benefits that are designed to keep members safe, monitor high risk medication use and prevent fraudulent pharmacy practices. For example – the 2016 law specifically prohibits members from synchronizing controlled substances because this would refill these medications earlier than their prescriber or plan benefits prescribers would allow. This protection is undone in HB 5895, and if this bill were to pass members would be able to fill



opioid medications earlier than intended. This situation would increase the danger for members already at high risk of addiction and diversion of these drugs.

For these reasons, PCMA asks you to withdraw house bill No. 5895 from consideration. Our work in 2016 has been shown to be successful for Rhode Island patients, making medication synchronization available while preserving safety guardrails in the health plan benefit. This work and these safety checks would be undone under HB 5895.

Please let us know if we can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melodie Shrader", written in a cursive style.

Melodie Shrader  
Senior Director – State Affairs  
Pharmaceutical Care Management Association