



September 18, 2017

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN FIGHTS HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANIES USE OF OPIOID INCENTIVES

Chicago —Attorney General Lisa Madigan joined a coalition of 37 state attorneys general urging health insurance companies to examine financial incentives that contribute to the opioid epidemic in Illinois.

Describing the opioid epidemic as “the preeminent public health crisis of our time,” Madigan and the other attorneys general sent a letter to industry trade groups and major insurance providers nationwide urging them to review their coverage and payment policies as the starting point in a coalition-initiated dialogue focused on incentive structures across the insurance industry. The letter is part of the coalition’s efforts to identify problematic policies and encourage reforms to spur increased use of non-opioid alternatives for treatment of chronic, non-cancer pain.

In part, the letter states:

“We have witnessed firsthand the devastation that the opioid epidemic has wrought on our States in terms of lives lost and the costs it has imposed on our healthcare system and the broader economy. As the chief legal officers of our States, we are committed to using all tools at our disposal to combat this epidemic and to protect patients suffering from chronic pain or addiction.”

Madigan and the other attorneys general, in acknowledging the role insurance companies play in reducing opioid prescriptions, hope to assess the impact that insurance incentive structures have on the opioid epidemic. They contend that providing incentives to promote the use of non-opioid techniques would increase the likelihood of medical providers considering such treatments, including physical therapy, acupuncture, massage, chiropractic care and non-opioid medications.

Increased reliance on these alternatives would combat a significant factor contributing to the epidemic – the over-prescription of opioid painkillers. The letter notes the number of opioid prescriptions have quadrupled since 1999, despite Americans reporting a steady amount of pain.

Joining Madigan in signing the letter were the attorneys general from: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

A copy of the letter is available [here](#).

-30-

[Return to September 2017 Press Releases](#)

