

Improved Medication Adherence is Major Opportunity for Change in State Healthcare Systems

White Paper Details Strategic Approach to Improve Health at Lower Costs

(June 3, 2014) The Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease (PFCD), along with Prescriptions for a Healthy America and My Campaign Group, has released a white paper on one of the many challenges facing our health care system – medication adherence and how to empower people to more effectively and efficiently manage their chronic conditions. Prepared for the Democratic Governors Association, [Bending the Healthcare Cost Curve through Better Medication Adherence for People Suffering from Chronic Disease](#), provides a series of cost-saving policy options focused on caring for the significant and growing number of Americans coping with chronic conditions by enabling people to achieve better health outcomes at lower costs through medication adherence.

[Lack of adherence to recommended medications to treat chronic illness is driving up healthcare costs and hurting the U.S. economy](#). Lack of adherence to medication is estimated to cause approximately 125,000 deaths and at least 10 percent of hospitalizations. While non-adherence costs the U.S. healthcare system between \$100 billion and \$289 billion annually, [improved adherence to diabetes medications alone could avert 699,000 emergency department visits and 341,000 hospitalizations annually, resulting in savings of approximately \\$4.7 billion](#).

As policymakers determine the most impactful ways to improve health AND economic bottom lines, it is critical to find sustainable solutions to decrease healthcare costs and also positively impact prevention and better management for constituents. The recommendations outlined in the white paper include:

1. Building self-management skills,
2. Adopting comprehensive medication therapy management programs,
3. Deploying medication synchronization services, and,
4. Allowing 90-day refills for chronic care medicines.

“It can be a challenge to find ways to make positive changes that will have a long-term impact on our healthcare system, but improved medication adherence is a very tangible way to prevent and better manage chronic disease and ultimately, lower healthcare costs,” said Ken Thorpe, PFCD Chairman. “Three out of four Americans report not always taking medications as directed making for a very ripe opportunity to encourage lasting changes in our approach to healthcare. With state policymakers taking the lead on this issue there is great potential for measurable impact.”

“P4HA has been working with our diverse membership, including PFCD, to advance public policies that help reduce healthcare costs and improve the lives of patients across the nation through medication adherence interventions,” said Joel White, President of Prescriptions for a Healthy America. “We commend the DGA on their efforts to identify specific solutions, which can be implemented within states and improve medication adherence and overall health for their

residents. For the sake of lower health costs and literally tens of thousands of lives, we hope Governors act to implement medication adherence strategies in Medicaid and state health programs.”