

The Independent News

An official publication of GPhA's Academy of Independent Pharmacy
The mission of AIP is to ensure the economic viability and security of independent pharmacy, and to
advance the concept of pharmacy care designed to enhance patient quality of life and positive outcomes.

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MARCH 2022

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REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Chairman's Message

We're back. I hope we are indeed back to some level of normalcy. Mask mandates have been lifted and the number of positive Covid cases continues to diminish. Yet we still need to keep our guard up and keep our patients safe. Especially with those who are immune compromised.

Enough of that. On Monday, February 28th, I had the pleasure to host Senator is Warnock's office a week earlier to help the senator launch his, AFFORDABLE INSULIN NOW ACT legislation. The purpose of this bill is to make sure that ALL Americans pay no more than \$35.00 per month for any of the currently prescribed insulin products. I think most of us have come across patients who have had a difficult time affording their medications, including insulin. This is a bold step in the feds trying to lower prescription drug costs. What better way than to start with insulin, which affects over 1 million Georgia patients, or more than 12% of the state's adult population. I applaud the Senator for taking, what I consider should have been done a long time ago, the lead on this legislation. As we all know, it is the independent community pharmacist who is best able to manage our diabetic patients, who in most cases present with additional medical issues. Our most able-bodied Director, Dr. Jonathan Marquess, will keep a close eye on this bill as it moves forward in the Senate.

The ability for each of us to advocate for our profession is paramount. Our beloved past AIP Director, Jeff Lurey, would say, "GET INTO POLITICS OR GET OUT OF PHARMACY, is vitally important to maintain and support our mission of maintaining the economic viability of independent pharmacy in Georgia.

We had success with HB 1351, the Medicaid Carve-out bill. It passed unanimously in the Special Access to Quality Health Care committee. First step accomplished, now on to the Rules committee for their approval. Look out for additional emails from Jonathan on reaching out to the members of that committee and asking for their support. Pharmacists are a force to be reckoned with. When one of us reaches out to a Representative or Senator, they pay attention to what we ask them to support. So when asked, make sure to call or email those members even if you don't know them.

With the retirement of Gene & Charles, and Melissa taking over the position of VP of GPhA Government Affairs and Policy, we needed to hire two new member service representatives. The state is divided into three districts. The northern third will be covered by Ashton Sullivan, the central third will now be covered by Catherine Daniel and the bottom third of the state will continue to be covered by Rhonda Bonner. Our new MSR's will begin March 1st.

Ashton has been with GPhA as Bob's administrative assistant and brings a great deal of knowledge and understanding of pharmacy issues. Catherine, has plenty of experience in an independent pharmacy as her dad, Blake Daniel, is the owner of Hospital Discount Drugs in Griffin. Please welcome both Ashton and Catherine as they begin to visit each of your pharmacies. They will be calling each of you to make an appointment with the owner/PIC/manager to discuss the latest news an updates with regards to our profession. Be patient and give them the time they deserve to help answer any questions or issues you might have.

AIP remains the envy of other state pharmacy groups and we want to remain that way. We will continue to work hard to improve our relationships with our partners. All the while to find new partners and opportunities to better our businesses.



Ira

Members Please Be Aware

When emailing AIP regarding pharmacy issues please include your name, pharmacy name, address, phone number and NPI#.

Medicaid Fee-For-Service: Reimbursement Helpful Hints

The following information is applicable to Medicaid Fee-For-Service Claims. This does not apply to Managed Medicaid (CMO) claims. Please refer to the CMO's PBM for information concerning appeals for managed Medicaid. BIN 001553 PCN GAM

NON-SPECIALTY DRUGS

Reimbursement for <u>NON</u>-specialty drugs that have a National Average Drug Acquisition Cost (NADAC) price on file will be reimbursed the lesser of the following:

- a) National Average Drug Acquisition Cost (NADAC) plus the Professional Dispensing Fee (PDF), or
- b) Georgia Maximum Allowable Cost (GMAC) plus the Professional Dispensing Fee (PDF), or
- c) Federal Upper Limit (FUL) plus Professional Dispensing Fee (PDF), or
- d) Provider submitted charges (including Usual and Customary Charges)

The professional dispensing fee is \$10.63.

Amanda Gaddy,R.Ph., AIP Director of Clinical

Services

Example: Xarelto 10mg- NADAC unit cost = \$16.53 each Quantity #30 Total Amount Paid should be (\$16.53 * 30) + \$10.63=

<u>IMPORTANT!</u> There is a delay in Medicaid loading updated pricing, so please check the NADAC website for weekly updates. It may be necessary to reverse and reprocess a claim after the system has been updated. Pricing is updated on Friday afternoons.

Click on www.medicaid.gov → Medicaid → Prescription Drugs → Pharmacy pricing: scroll to NADAC- National Average Drug Acquisition Cost chart and choose the most recent file. Export (top right corner)

APPEAL Process for claims paid based on NADAC:

Click on the following link to complete a price review/appeal if the total amount paid is less than the acquisition cost:

 $\underline{https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/prescription-drugs/downloads/retail-price-survey/hdform.pdf}$

NADAC Help Desk:

Toll-free phone: (855) 457-5264 Electronic mail: info@mslcrps.com Facsimile: (844) 860-0236

SPECIALTY DRUGS and GMAC Price Lists:

For a current list of Select Specialty Pharmacy Rates (SSPR) and GMAC rates, please refer online to www.mmis.georgia.gov o Pharmacy o Pricing List o

https://www.mmis.georgia.gov/portal/PubAccess.Pharmacy/GMAC%20List/tabId/56/Default.aspx

GMAC → GMAC List Q12022

GMAC Pub Copy 20220101 20211228183833.pdf (georgia.gov)

 $\frac{https://www.mmis.georgia.gov/portal/Portals/0/StaticContent/Public/ALL/NEW\%20GMAC\%20LIST/GMAC\%20Pub\%20Copy\%2020220101\%2020211228183833.pdf$

SSPR → Select Specialty Pharmacy Rates (SSPR)

Select Specialty Pharmacy Rates (SSPR) Effective 01.01.22 011822 20220124154329.pdf (georgia.gov)

https://www.mmis.georgia.gov/portal/Portals/0/StaticContent/Public/ALL/NEW%20GMAC%20LIST/Select%20Specialty%20Pharmacy%20Rates%20(SSPR)%20Effective%2001.01.22%20011822%2020220124154329.pdf

APPEALS for claims paid at SSPR or GMAC:

All disputes to a current SSPR or MAC may be submitted by completing a *Pricing Appeal Form* and faxing it along with a copy of an invoice received within 30 days of the appeal date.

The form should be faxed to OptumRx at 1-888-292-4814.

Continued on Page 3

Chairman's Message—Continued from Page 1

I also want to thank Jonathan for stepping in to the AIP Director's position. I know he will do an outstanding job as our director and bring some new opportunities to each of us.

In addition, our very own Verouschka, V, continues to do an incredible job as the Manager of AIP Member Services as well as working on our GPhA annual convention exposition. Thank you V for all your hard work.

I hope each or you have had an opportunity to contribute to Tim Short's campaign. I sent out an email to you earlier with a link to make your contribution. We need another pharmacist in our state house of representatives. Please give Tim your love and support.

Here it is again;

www.votetimshort.com

or on Facebook---Search for Tim Short for State House

Thank you all for your support,

Ira

Medicaid Fee-For-Service: Reimbursement Helpful Hints—Continued from Page 2

Please note: The submission of a pricing appeal does not guarantee a change in pricing.

Pricing Appeal Form location: $\underline{\text{https://ga-providerportal.optum.com}} \rightarrow \text{click the link for Pricing Appeal Form}$

ge Orgia.gov

All users must be a current provider for Georgia Medicaid

To begin the registration process, please complete the Portal Registration Form below and send to:

Fax: (888) 292-4814

Email: GAMProvider.PortalTeam@optum.com

Portal Registration in Word Portal Registration in PDF Pricing Appeal Form

Sign in using One Healthcare ID

If you already have your One Healthcare ID credentials for this web portal, please sign in

Questions and information regarding appeals for CMO- Managed Medicaid claims should be directed to the PBM.

Health Plan	PBM	BIN	PCN	Group	Helpdesk
Amerigroup Community Care	IngenioRX	020107	HL	WKJA	833-235- 2031
CareSource	Express Scripts	003858	MA	RXINN01	800-416- 3630
PeachState Health Plan	CVS Caremark	004336	MCAIDADV	RX5439	844-297- 0513



Health Resources & Services Administration

HRSA Coverage Program for COVID Vaccines and Testing to End

On March 22, 2022 at 11:59 pm ET, the HRSA COVID-19 Uninsured Program will stop accepting claims for testing and treatment due to a lack of sufficient funds.

On April 5, 2022 at 11:59 pm ET, the HRSA COVID-19 Uninsured Program will also stop accepting vaccination claims due to a lack of sufficient funds.

Claims that have been submitted by these deadlines will be paid subject to eligibility and availability of funds.

For more information, please visit https://www.hrsa.gov/CovidUninsuredClaim



Hello – coming up in Atlanta in a little over two weeks is the NCPA Innovation Center's next Pharmacy Ownership Workshop, sponsored by McKesson.

Make your pharmacy dream come true

Maybe your dream is pharmacy ownership or having multiple locations? Maybe you're ready to take your pharmacy to

the next level. Either way, it takes planning! Do it the right way with the NCPA Innovation Center's Pharmacy Ownership Workshop, sponsored by McKesson. Over the years, the workshop has helped thousands of pharmacists change their career path. It's been a game-changer for folks who aspire to ownership and some who are struggling with ownership. NCPA is bringing the Pharmacy Ownership Workshop to Atlanta April 9 and 10. Learn more and register to attend, or share the registration link with someone who could use it. https://ncpa.org/pharmacy-ownership-workshop

Our own Jonathan Marquess, VP of AIP, will be speaking on Sunday!



Save The Date:

- **AIP Spring Meeting** Sunday March 13, 2022 GPhA Office, Sandy Springs, GA
- **GPhA Convention** Thursday June 9 -Sunday June 12, 2022 Omni Amelia Island, FL

AMY MILLER, R.Ph.— NEW AIP BOARD **MEMBER**



Amy Whelchel Miller graduated from UGA in 1991. For the first ten vears of her career, she lived and worked in

multiple states. She worked for several of the major chains (Treasury Drug, Kroger, Walgreens, and KMart) as well as managing a home health care pharmacy while living in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Colorado. While living in Pennsylvania, she worked simultaneously for two independently owned pharmacies. After moving back to Georgia in 2001, she worked for Sawnee Drug and Arnold Drug before managing Lula Pharmacy. In 2008 she and Karen Bowling became its proud owners. She lives in Gainesville, Ga with her husband Laird and their two border collies. She and Laird are members of Gainesville First United Methodist Church. She has served on the GPhA Board of Directors, her church Council, the Northeast Georgia Hospital Advisory Committee, the UGA College of Pharmacy Alumni Council and is a founding member of WomenSource.

Jonathan Marquess is On the Road Again!

By Michelle Turkington, Georgia Pharmacy Magazine Editor

Well, to say the least, it's been a busy couple of months for Jonathan Marguess, PharmD, CDCES, FAPhA, GPhA's Vice President of the Academy of Independent Pharmacy (AIP). He's the talk of the town on GPhA's social media. Georgia Pharmacy Magazine sat down with him to learn about his top priorities and vision for independent pharmacy.

"I have two months under my belt and I can say, I love my job and the people I work with," said Marquess. "I love my job because I help independent pharmacists each and every day, whether it's a small challenge or a big problem. At the end of the day, we help pharmacists provide better patient care. I still have a lot to learn, and Jeff Lurey left some big shoes to fill. We have had a great response from our members. Thank you for the warm welcome! I'm here to help. Don't be afraid to get in touch."

Continued on Page 5





Putting a value on pharmacy freedom By B. Douglas Hoey, RPh, MBA, National Community Pharmacists Association CEO

I heard an old Aretha Franklin song, and you might say it set off a chain reaction. The song was Chain of Fools," with its snappy "chain-chain-chain" refrain.

Naturally, with chain on my brain, I thought about big-box chain drug stores, and I realized something: The word "chain" — and that's a word they use to describe themselves — has some negative connotations.

Apparently, a number of National Community Pharmacists Association members had that feeling when they worked for one of the big-boxes. In the February issue of America's Pharmacist®, NCPA's magazine, we interviewed members who came to independent pharmacy from national chain careers. I wasn't surprised that the vast majority felt weighed down by chain life.

Ask almost every pharmacist why they chose a career in pharmacy, and the answer you hear most is "I wanted to help people." Pharmacy is a career where you can help people in a lot of different ways, from working with them to improve health outcomes to compounding a medication tailored to their needs to becoming their trusted and accessible medical professional. Independent pharmacy takes those concepts up many notches because we set our own priorities. Patient care is front and center, and you can take the time to have a critical conversation with a patient without feeling like there's a stopwatch on you.

Big-box chains are almost the definition of cookie-cutter. A CVS in Portland, Ore., looks like a CVS in Portland, Maine. A Walgreens in Springfield, Ill., looks like a Walgreens in Springfield, Va. And a Walmart Pharmacy in Miami, Fla., is a carbon copy of one in Miami, Okla. Think about that for a minute. Those cities share a name but couldn't be more different. Each city has its own personality, exactly what locally owned pharmacies reflect.

When you own an independent pharmacy, you are embedded in the community instead coming across as the stranger headquartered in some faraway locale. NCPA members sponsor local teams, lend a hand at community events, and make deliveries – even before the pandemic. Sixty percent of independent pharmacy owners financially contribute to five or more community organizations — not to mention the countless organizations they volunteer their time to support. It's more likely to see the logo of a big-box chain on the outfield wall of a major league stadium than across the back of a Little League uniform.

And don't forget the happiness factor. According to the 2019 National Pharmacist Workforce Study released every five years from the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, independent pharmacists reported higher levels of job satisfaction compared to chain pharmacists (68 percent and 27 percent, respectively), and having more control in their work environment (50 percent to 12 percent).

Of course, independently owned pharmacies have challenges of their own — some shared with the big-box stores and some unique. But for many pharmacy owners, breaking free from their chain was their best decision.

Jonathan Marquess is On the Road Again!—Continued from Page 4



We asked Marquess about his priorities. As VP of AIP, he is responsible for more than 400 independent pharmacies. "Our mission is to advance the concept of pharmacy care. For many years, pharmacists have been known as dispensers of pills," said Marquess. "We do that very well. I like doing that myself, once or twice a month." Marquess and his pharmacist wife Pamela Marquess, PharmD, own 14 pharmacies and a disease management company. Pamela manages the pharmacies and assigns him tasks as needed.

"We have to take the profession further and work to ensure the economic viability of independent pharmacy. That spans from stopping unfair practices of the pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) to providing training on chronic care management

(CCM) and how to set that program up in your pharmacy.

"We do a great job on audit assistance, which we know hits independents with higher frequency. We have saved members more than \$1.6 million over the last five years," shared Marquess. "A lot of people have contacted me to say, 'thanks, we appreciate the tips, but we never knew the amount of money we saved.' Those are real dollars, \$1.6 million, but it's actually more than that."

Marquess spoke about the power of partnerships, especially in terms of the discounts members can take advantage of, and the cutting-edge new products available. "I want to really explore our partnerships and maybe revamp the relationships in some way. We have great partners now. I want us to be a great partner, as well," said Marquess.

Marquess shared that he's has done a little restructuring and added some team members. He said, "Our Member Service Representatives are critical to our organization. We have two new team members, Ashton Sullivan MSR, North Georgia, and Catherine Daniel, MSR, Middle Georgia. We have maintained continuity with Rhonda Bonner, MSR, in South Georgia.

Congratulations to Jeff Lurey, Charles Boone, and Gene Smith, who recently retired. Melissa Reybold is our new VP of Public Policy and doing an excellent job. Verouschka "V" Betancourt-Whigham remains (a 22-year veteran) as our Manager of AIP Member Services and is a wealth of knowledge and is always there to take your call.

"I would ask you to get to know your MSR. They have a lot of valuable resources to share with you. The Member Service Reps will be coming to your pharmacy quarterly. Also, you can contact them at any time. Utilize them to their fullest potential because they are a big asset to the academy and the association," said Marquess.

Marquess told us there is strength in numbers and your relationships are powerful. "I think the time is right. You all were so successful with House Bill 1351. Your calls to your representatives made it happen. This bill deals with the managed care carve-out for Medicaid, and it's made its way to the Georgia Senate. When we send a "call to action" please respond. It's so important. I make about 20 calls to representatives when I receive a call to action. They are professional and polite, but they always ask me where I live. Your local relationships are crucial. When they talk to you, a member of their community, it all clicks. An elected official who lives in your community or goes to your church or synagogue. They listen. They take action. Let them know about the issues that impact your lively hood. Do as much as you can when we send the call to action notices."

Marquess looks forward to meeting with members at the upcoming Spring Region Meetings in April, at the Georgia Pharmacy Convention in June, and at your pharmacy in the near future. His enthusiasm is contagious and it's clear he's excited about the future of AIP. Bob Coleman, the CEO of Georgia Pharmacy Association, told us he is grateful for the experience Marquess brings to his new role. "It's great to see the team come together under his leadership."



GPhA is offering Immunization Delivery Training for Pharmacy Technicians, a 6.0 hour CE program consisting of both homestudy and live training.

Saturday, April 2, Douglas, Georgia Saturday, April 23, Atlanta, Georgia

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The Academy of Independent Pharmacy (AIP) Member Service Representatives!

They say good things come in threes. I have exciting news to share. You might know our Member Service Representatives (MSR) Gene Smith and Charles Boone retired this past year. We've found some great talent to try to fill their shoes, starting March 1. They will be in your area soon!



Ashton Sullivan, MSR North Georgia, is no stranger to GPhA. She's been the governance manager and executive assistant to Bob Coleman for the past year, where she has learned a lot about pharmacy in Georgia. She's originally from Statesboro, Georgia,

and currently resides in Canton. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Public Health and served in the US Army as a human resources officer.



Catherine Daniel, MSR Middle Georgia, is also no stranger to pharmacy. She hails from Griffin, Georgia, where she has been working for her father, Blake Daniel, RPh, AIP member, owner/ pharmacist, at Hospital Discount Drug, in Griffin. She plans to move

to Macon to better cover her area. She has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Clayton State University, specializing in marketing.



You might recognize Rhonda Bonner, MSR South Georgia. She has been with AIP since 2007. Rhonda attended Eckert College in St. Petersburg. She moved to Georgia in 1986 and now lives in Cairo. Rhonda enjoys traveling the state, meeting with members,

and helping resolve their issues.



I would be remiss if I didn't mention another important member of the AIP team, Verouschka "V" Betancourt-Whigham, AIP Manager of Member Services. She is always there to take your call and answer your questions.

So, get excited! You'll be receiving a visit soon.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Marquess, PharmD, CDCES, FAPhA Vice President of AIP Georgia Pharmacy Association

Georgia Pharmacy Foundation



Foundation Hundred Challenge

Because students are the future of pharmacy

\$100 from 100 people. That's all it takes.

Make a fast break now, because just like March Madness, this tournament ends Monday, April 4.

https://www.gpha.org/georgia-pharmacy-foundation-100-from-100/





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WHY HAVE DRUG COSTS INCREASED?

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large pharmacy benefit managers (PBM) incorporated Note: B=billion

Source: CMS National Health Expenditures by type of service 1960-2018, Https://www.cms.gov/research-statistics-data-and-systems/statitics-trends-and-reports/nationalhealthexpenddata/nationalhealthaccountshistorical.html.



PROJECTED REVENUE

"According to one estimate, PBMs fail to pass \$120 billion back to consumers, and retain another \$30 billion in additional out-of-pocket costs. You can blame the pharmacy benefit managers for highter drug prices." Real Clear Health, 2017

Source: www. realhealthcare.com/articles/2017/03/28/you_can_blame_pharmacy_benefit_managers_for_higher_drug_prices_110516.html

With AIP, independent never means alor

For more information, visit www.gpha.org or call Jonathan Marquess, PharmD, CDCES, FAPhA, GPhA VP of AIP at (404) 419-8103, jmarquess@gpha.org.





Part D plans are sending you their new rates for 2023

NCPA is advising members that some PBMs may offer reduced reimbursement for the upcoming Medicare Part D plan year (CY2023). NCPA anticipates that the terms some PBMs may offer might reimburse independent pharmacies below their product acquisition cost. Additionally, please be aware that some contracts are opt-out contracts that require a pharmacy to proactively send a specific form of notice to a PBM, sometimes within a short period of time, declining participation in the network if the pharmacy determines that the terms offered are not satisfactory. Otherwise, the PBM-proposed terms would likely go into effect for the entire 2023 Medicare Part D plan year. Part D plans and PBMs are **required by law** to maintain network access standards for beneficiaries. Further, PBMs are required to have "reasonable and relevant terms and conditions" for any willing pharmacy" to participate in a Part D network, so pharmacies should review any proposed contract for issues which might adversely affect their operation. Members should make an independent business decision as to whether the proposed terms are appropriate for their pharmacy. NCPA urges member pharmacies to carefully evaluate the financial and other terms of any proposed contract and to adhere to PBM deadlines and any specific notice requirements in their contract with a PBM.



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KEEP INDEPENDENTS INDEPENDENT

Please don't forget, if you have a desire to sell your pharmacy or if you have an interest in buying a pharmacy, please contact Jonathan Marquess at 404-419-8103. We have been quite successful during the past several years at keeping independents independent. We maintain a list of pharmacists who want to buy additional pharmacies and we also keep a list of young pharmacists who want to own a pharmacy. All information is kept strictly confidential.



AIP MISSION STATEMENT

To advance the concept of pharmacy care. To ensure the economic viability and security of Independent Pharmacy; To provide a forum for Independent Pharmacy to exchange information and develop strategies, goals and objectives; To address the unique business and professional issues of independent pharmacies; To develop and implement marketing opportunities for members of the Academy with emphasis on the third party prescription drug program/benefit market; To provide educational programs designed to enhance the managerial skills of Independent Pharmacy Owners and Managers; and, To establish and implement programs and services designed to assist Independent Pharmacy Owners and Managers.



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