

November 3, 2011

The Honorable Ed Whitfield  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2368 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Whitfield:

As the leading trade association solely representing Medicaid managed care plans, Medicaid Health Plans of America (MHPA) writes in support of the National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting (NASPER) Reauthorization Act of 2011, H.R. 866. MHPA appreciates that NASPER continues to help states fight the growing epidemic of prescription drug abuse and addiction while cutting down on waste, fraud and abuse in the Medicaid program. We applaud your leadership on this issue.

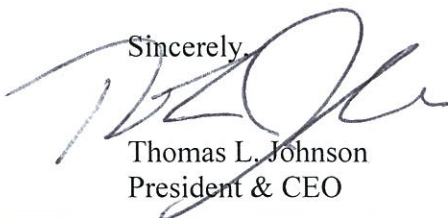
With the enactment of NASPER following its passage in 2005, states were given a new vital tool to help combat prescription drug abuse and addiction through access to new grant dollars for the creation and/or maintenance of prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs). PDMPs are increasingly being utilized to help health care providers, law enforcement and other officials monitor the dispensing of controlled substances in order to reduce diversion, as well as ensure legitimate use and patient safety.

As you may recall, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a 2009 study conducted in five states that showed prescription drug abuse cost the Medicaid programs in those states \$65 million in 2006 and 2007 – which adds up to hundreds of millions of wasted taxpayer dollars across the country. With abuse and addiction of controlled substances having risen in recent years, the resulting waste in the Medicaid program is at an egregiously high level. While health plans and pharmacy benefit managers help to reduce inappropriate prescription use, many Medicaid pharmacy programs are still completely unmanaged.

It is important to MHPA that Members of Congress and other leaders continue efforts to reduce waste, fraud and abuse in the Medicaid program. MHPA prides itself in representing plans that help states save money by better managing the health care of Medicaid enrollees. This is achieved through better coordination and monitoring of the delivery of health care services and benefits, including prescription medications. The PDMPs supported by NASPER are an additional tool that MHPA network providers can use to help plans continue to ensure that patients have access to needed medications, while reducing costly abuse and diversion.

Once again, MHPA endorses the reauthorization of NASPER through H.R. 866 and looks forward to working with you in the future to reduce costs in the Medicaid program. Should you have any questions, please contact Joe Moser, Director of Federal Affairs, at 202-857-5720.

Sincerely,



Thomas L. Johnson  
President & CEO