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Subject: NASHP News: NASHP Launches Rx Cost Work Group; Releases States and Prescription Drugs: An Overview of State Programs to Reign in Costs

Newsletter

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NASHP Launches Rx Cost Work Group; Releases States and Prescription Drugs: An Overview of State Programs to Reign in Costs

Prescription drug prices have never been far from the minds of state officials but never more so than today. A new paper from NASHP, [States and Prescription Drugs: An Overview of State Programs to Reign in Costs](#), summarizes the many activities states now pursue to lower costs. It will form the

starting point as NASHP launches a work group of state officials who will explore new policies and programs to address the costs of prescription drugs.

As blockbuster and specialty drugs emerge in the market, states are confronted with new and rising costs. Medicaid has been front and center in efforts to curb drug costs but the issues affect many more state policymakers, cutting across public sector health plans for state employees and retirees, corrections, mental health facilities, teachers and university employees and retirees and state-based health insurance marketplaces. As high deductibles become more commonplace in private insurance and out of pocket exposure for pharmacy costs grows, insurance regulators also contemplate the need for change.

NASHP's Rx Cost Work Group will include officials from the executive and legislative branches of state governments and will examine the many roles states play – as purchaser, policymaker, regulator and investor – to identify new and emerging strategies that may have promise to reduce costs. NASHP recognizes that the issues are complex – the value of prescription drugs to reduce suffering and treat or cure disease must be weighed against affordability. Pharmaceutical companies are big employers in some states and profitable pharmaceutical companies help support the portfolios of state pension plans and other retirement savings. The work group will bring these perspectives to bear as it reviews what states now do to address pharmaceutical costs and examines new approaches that may hold promise for the future.

This is a one-year project funded in part by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation whose support

made possible [States and Prescription Drugs: An Overview of State Programs to Reign in Costs](#), and by the Kaiser Permanente Foundation. Membership of the work group is nearly complete and will be announced shortly. [Read the full paper here](#).

[Managing Medicaid Managed Care: New State Strategies to Promote Accountability and Performance](#)

As the scope of State Medicaid agencies becomes wider and more complex, states are increasingly turning to managed care organizations (MCOs) to cover Medicaid Enrollees, including those with complex needs. This shift from a fee-for-service, volume-based payment model requires states

to effectively manage MCOs and other vendors. With states facing tight budgets, limited staff, and limited resources, managing these changes can be difficult.

To assure that Medicaid managed care programs deliver effective and efficient care, states are moving to value-based purchasing (VBP). A VBP approach holds vendors accountable for outcomes. It is not a single strategy but rather an approach that requires complex new financial arrangements, different oversight and engagement, and new procurement and contracting strategies. This brief reports on a discussion of strategies that states use to successfully implement VBP among state 10 Medicaid agencies and Balleet Health Purchasing, LLC. [Read the full brief](#).

[Webinar: A Conversation with State Officials on Medicaid Dental Managed Care](#)

An increasing number of states are using managed care approaches to deliver Medicaid dental services. In this webinar, state policymakers from Kentucky, Arizona, and Pennsylvania—three states that administer Medicaid benefits through managed care contracts that include both medical and dental services—will share their insights about strategies to ensure that managed care contractors and their subcontractors maintain an adequate network of dental providers, provide outreach and care coordination to members, and promote quality improvement. The webinar is scheduled for **Friday, April 29th** at 1:00 p.m.

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