



TESTIMONY OF TERICA GATEWOOD Pharm-D

Before the Kansas Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

February 11, 2015

Madame Chair, members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, my name is Terica Gatewood and I am a pharmacist and site manager for Genoa, a QoL Healthcare Company. Thank you for the opportunity to express Genoa's opposition to Senate Bill 123, a bill that repeals the statutory exemption from Prior Authorizations and Preferred Drug Lists for Medicaid mental health medications. We are opposed because we believe this bill will cause a disruption our patients' healthcare.

Genoa places pharmacies inside community mental health centers. My pharmacy is located within Valeo Behavioral Healthcare in Topeka. We understand the unique and special needs of the severe and persistent mentally ill (SPMI) population. Our pharmacies offer full service, confidential and discrete pharmacy services to clients, and present a convenience for filling prescriptions. Our pharmacies have very low rates of unclaimed prescriptions, resulting in higher compliance and lower overall healthcare costs.

Over ninety percent of Genoa's patients are on some kind of public assistance, Medicare, Medicaid or are dual eligible. Therefore, any legislation affecting Medicaid affects our patients disproportionately compared to other pharmacies. Genoa pharmacists work very hard to ensure our patients receive the best possible care and are adherent to their medications. On average, mental health patients take 48 prescriptions per year. Comparatively, a person not living with a mental illness takes 12 per year.

Medication adherence is especially important within the mental health population. Studies have shown that a one-day gap in therapy increases the chance of hospitalization by 50 percent. A hospital stay for a person living with Schizophrenia can cost between sixteen and twenty-two thousand dollars.

By removing the statutory exemption, this bill will allow Medicaid to require prior authorization for mental health drugs. Prior authorization can take up to 7 days and requires approximately 60 minutes of staff time to submit and document each request. This adds up to time the patient has to go without that medication. This process also increases for people taking multiple medications per month. Our patients will not wait for their medications. Furthermore, many of our patients rely on public transportation and once they leave the facility, they will normally not return to pick up their prescriptions.

This will cause lower adherence rates and will increase the number of unclaimed prescription.

Each day as a pharmacist for Genoa, I am in a unique position to help patients with their mental illness. Each patient and situation is unique and must be handled that way for the treatment to be successful. For many of our patients it has taken months for them to seek and begin treatment. With this special population I feel it is vital that we have all medication options available for our patients when they finally arrive willing to receive that treatment. One area where prior authorizations will have a major impact is, same day treatment and the use of long acting injectable antipsychotics. These specific medications are given prior to the patient leaving the facility. They increase the chance of successful treatment for patients by reducing the opportunity of non-compliance found with oral medications. I ask today that you help keep important treatments such as this, available and accessible to our patients. I ask that prior to your vote you consider the patient and the strength it took seek help, and their need to receive timely, therapeutic treatment. We ask that you do this by voting no on SB123.

Madame Chair, members of the Committee, once again thank you for allowing me to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 123. Genoa respectfully asks that you vote no on SB 123. Thank you and I will try to answer any questions you may have.