



ADAP Advocacy Association

aaa+

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ADAP Advocacy Association Urges Anthem Blue Cross of California to Change its Mail-Order Only Pharmacy Policy for Patients Living with HIV/AIDS; Direct patient-pharmacist consultation is vital component to successful adherence and treatment

Community-based pharmacies & mail-order pharmacies should both be available to patients

WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 13, 2013) – The [ADAP Advocacy Association](http://www.adapadvocacyassociation.org), also known as **aaa+**, today urged Anthem Blue Cross of California to reverse course on its recent decision requiring that certain members only obtain their medications by mail order. The policy adversely impacts members living with HIV/AIDS because direct patient-pharmacist consultation is widely recognized as improving treatment adherence.

“Patients should be afforded as many treatment options as possible, especially when combatting a chronic disease such as HIV/AIDS,” argued **Brandon M. Macsata**, CEO of the ADAP Advocacy Association. “Any policy that restricts the patient’s ability to interact directly with health care professionals, including a pharmacist, is counter intuitive to promoting better medication adherence, which is critically important to improved health.”

“The recent reversal away from the mail-order pharmacy only for the federally run PCIP insurance programs allowing ADAP clients to maintain their local pharmacy delivery systems is a clear signal that the potential harms to HIV-positive patients has been recognized at the federal level,” added **Bill Arnold**, Executive Director of the [Community Access National Network](http://www.cann.org) (CANN). “Now we have to watch for similar damaging insurance rules in state and local medication delivery systems.”

A statement issued by Consumer Watchdog reads, “The change is discriminatory under state civil rights law and potentially devastating for HIV/AIDS patients. Many rely on their local pharmacist who, working directly with the patients, can monitor potentially life-threatening adverse drug interactions. Blue Cross’s change will also cause consumers to lose access to drug discounts available only at retail pharmacies, which save patients thousands of dollars each year. Pharmacists also provide essential advice and counseling that help HIV/AIDS patients and their families navigate the challenges of living with a chronic and often debilitating condition. Additionally, the time lag associated with mail order medication could be life-threatening.”¹

aaa+ is closely monitoring a class action lawsuit filed against Anthem Blue Cross of California on January 11th by the watchdog group, Consumer Watchdog. Among the plaintiffs’ concerns are the patients will no longer benefit from having a clinical pharmacist monitor them for potentially dangerous drug interactions, potential delays in treatment when medication shipments are mishandled, and it discriminates based on a medical condition.²

¹ Consumer Watchdog, “[Blue Cross Sued for Discriminating Against HIV/AIDS Patients; New Pharmacy Program Threatens Health & Privacy](#),” 01/14/13.

² LawyersandSettlements.com, “[California Insurance Company Faces Discrimination Lawsuit](#),” 01/25/13.

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To learn more about the importance of HIV/AIDS medication adherence, or the ADAP Advocacy Association, please contact Brandon M. Macsata by phone at (305) 519-4256 or email at info@adapadvocacyassociation.org.

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