

CompPharma Survey Shows Workers' Comp Pharmacy Costs Continued to Decline During COVID-19

MAGGIE VALLEY, NC, UNITED STATES, September 22, 2021 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Workers' compensation pharmacy costs continued their decline during COVID-19, driven by a steady reduction in opioid use, according to [CompPharma's 17th Annual Survey of Prescription Drug Management in Workers' Compensation](#).



"Despite reports of increased opioid use among workers' comp patients during the COVID year, survey respondents saw opioid spend drop to 17 percent of total workers' comp drug spend, which was approximately \$3 billion in 2020," said CompPharma President Joe Paduda.

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Joe Paduda, President of CompPharma

Workers' comp opioid spend has gone down over 62 percent since 2016, according to data collected through CompPharma's surveys over these years.

“Comp has been far more successful in combatting the opioid crisis than the nation as a whole,” Paduda said. “The industry recognized the disastrous implications of opioid overprescribing earlier and addressed the issue sooner. Payers, regulators, and pharmacy benefit managers deserve a lot of credit.”

Less opioid spend translates into lower overall pharmacy costs for the industry. Total workers' comp pharmacy costs have decreased by 38 percent over the past decade. Survey respondents credited the reduction in part to less use of opioids and the multiple medications needed to address opioid side effects. Other factors cited were:

- California's pharmacy fee schedule
- Competitive PBM market
- Greater buying power that came from consolidation in the PBM industry

Despite lower pharmacy costs, respondents consider pharmacy management slightly more important than other medical issues. "They recognize that drugs can have a greater effect on medical costs, disability duration, and claims closure than other medical services," Paduda noted.

Respondents, who represent state funds, carriers, self-insured employers, guarantee funds, and third-party administrators, identified other emerging issues as PBM consolidation leading to poor service, less innovation, and differentiation. Pricing transparency, physician dispensing, and mail-order pharmacies were other concerns.



Joe Paduda, President of CompPharma

A complimentary copy of the report, available at www.comppharma.com/resources provides additional details on what payers want from their PBMs and several charts tracking historical data.

About CompPharma

Owned by Joe Paduda and Helen King Patterson, CompPharma, LLC is a research and consulting firm focused on pharmacy management in workers' compensation. More information is available at www.comppharma.com or by contacting Patterson at 813-690-4787 or hpatterson@comppharma.com.

Helen King Patterson

King Knight Communications

+1 813-690-4787

helen@kingknight.com

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