

# Louisiana Independent Pharmacies Association

## What's New and What to Watch

### LIPA Newsletter:

Bringing you the latest news and information concerning independent pharmacies and the profession at-large....



### Presentations at July LIPA Meeting Now Available for CPE Credit

On July 23, LIPA held a daylong meeting in Covington with guest speakers who addressed issues of importance to community pharmacy administration. Attendees provided a lot of positive feedback, and we are pleased to be able to share videos and transcripts of the three sessions and provide an opportunity for pharmacists to earn up to 4.25 hours of Continuing Pharmacy Education. For those of you who have already completed your CPE requirements for 2021, you can complete and earn credit for these three Activities anytime between now and December 31 of **2022**. Here are the links to see the announcement, register, and view the video. Upon completion of the evaluation/learning assessment, your CPE credit will be automatically uploaded to *CPE Monitor*:

[The Business of Community Pharmacy](#) Benjamin Jolley 1.25 CE Hours

[In Pursuit of Greater Transparency in the Prescription Drug Marketplace](#) Mark Blum and Fred Mills 1.25 CE Hours

[Legal Considerations for Community Pharmacy Owners](#) Mark Cuker, Connor McCabe, Donelson Caffery 1.75 CE Hours

### Assume No Retro or Grace Period (per CMS) for Medicaid Provider Enrollment Due 3/31/22

All pharmacies enrolled as Louisiana Medicaid providers should have received an e-mail/invite—and in some cases, Second Notices/invites have already gone out—advising them to reenroll through the Louisiana Medicaid Provider Enrollment Portal no later than March 31, 2022. While March 31<sup>st</sup> may seem a long way off, we encourage you to go to the Louisiana Medicaid Provider Enrollment Portal and re-enroll immediately. Currently, we understand it can take up to three weeks to process provider re-enrollments. Providers who have not reenrolled by the March 31<sup>st</sup> deadline will have their claims denied by both Louisiana Medicaid and Medicaid MCOs. We have been told there will be no grace period or retroactive payments for providers who miss the reenrollment deadline. For more information, see the [Informational Flyer](#).

## **Our LIPA Team Has Expanded**

With the rapidly expanding number of initiatives that LIPA is engaged in (advocacy on behalf of our members through legislative, legal and compliance strategies), troubleshooting PBM and PSAO issues, providing technical assistance and training to pharmacies and supporting LDH's COVID vaccine response on multiple fronts, we have brought on board some additional resources to the LIPA Team:

**Diane Batts**, a former long-time Louisiana Medicaid Deputy Director, is working with us in support of the *Shot for 100* initiative. Diane is widely respected for her vast knowledge of large-scale operations and is a recipient of the Louisiana Civil Service Charles Dunbar Award for her contributions to public service in Louisiana. Her responsibilities include compilation of *Shot for \$100* data that we provide daily to LDH and gift card tracking/ reconciliation.

**Jesse Allen** is providing *logistical support and has driven a couple thousand miles in the past 10 days delivering Shot for \$100* gift cards and vaccine transfers. A Missouri native, he has gotten a "crash course" in Louisiana geography, having already traveled to all LDH Regions except Region 5!

**Matthew Cross** is the most recent addition to our LIPA staff. He graduated from LSU in May, with a concentration in Political Communications. And in just three years! Prior to joining our team, Matthew worked with Senator Gerald Boudreaux, Senator Gerald Long, and Senator Robert Mills. He also has some experience of working in political campaigns for legislators that we know well. Matthew is the youngest child of the late senator Mike Cross that we all knew well and appreciated greatly. His experience, abilities, and social aptitude will serve LIPA and its endeavors greatly.

**Charlie Corona** joined our team after completing his bachelor's degree at LSU in Marketing. He is currently enrolled as a student in LSU's Flores MBA Program. Previously, Charlie worked for a couple of our independent pharmacies, which introduced him to LIPA, as well as to basic pharmacy operations and needs. Throughout his tenure with us, he has contributed to the COVID-19 booster vaccine administration process being carried out at Louisiana's Skilled Nursing Facilities, Adult Residential Care facilities, and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities facilities.

## ***Shot for \$100 at Louisiana Community Pharmacies Continues***

We now have more than 60 LIPA pharmacies that are *Shot for \$100* locations and collectively pursuing the goal of participating community pharmacies administering 5,000 first doses of COVID vaccine by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Some locations have already given out their initial allocation of gift cards and requested additional cards. LIPA is continually monitoring and working to

reposition gift cards as necessary to distribute all 5,000 cards. One early takeaway is that pharmacies that offer pediatric vaccine are administering a greater number of first doses. The holidays, Omicron variant and expectations that health care workers get the vaccine before January 4<sup>th</sup> are also driving first doses.

Two things for those of you that are *Shot for \$100* Locations:

- Here is the link to the online [Shot for \\$100 Gift Card Reconciliation – 12.10.21](#) *Shot for \$100* locations can also use the form to ask us questions, share what is working—and not working—for you, tell us how we can help you, and any other thing you would like us to be aware.
- Please let us know if you project that you have more gift cards on hand than you will realistically be able to distribute by 12/31/21. We can arrange to pick them up and transfer them to a pharmacy that has already exhausted their initial allocation.

### **Gift Cards Must Be Registered at Shotfor100.com to Be Activated**

We received clarification from LDH on Wednesday that registration of *Shot for \$100* cards at Shotfor100.com is **mandatory** for funds to be loaded onto the card. If the card was registered and the patient contacts the pharmacy to say that the card does not have funds loaded, advise them that the fastest way is to go to Shotfor100.com and click on the link reporting it has been 48 hours since they registered and that the card is not yet activated. LDH advises that they are getting back with people promptly to troubleshoot. One of the main resources they use for problem resolution is the information participating pharmacy locations input in the online form and daily log spreadsheet.

### **Pharmacies Dispensing Oral Antivirals for Treatment of COVID**

It has been a busy week for LIPA, supporting Leah Michael, Director of Pharmacy Services at the Louisiana Office of Public Health, in getting the infrastructure in place for distribution of oral antivirals for treatment of COVID. The first shipment is expected in a couple of weeks, so time is of the essence. Availability in Louisiana will be through independent pharmacies. Like vaccine, demand is expected to exceed supply in the initial weeks. Louisiana expects approximately 1,000 courses of treatment in Week 1. The minimum quantity—which will be allocated by LDH and shipped by Amerisource Bergen—is 20 courses of treatment, which means that a maximum of 50 pharmacies will be allocated oral antivirals in week one. Availability is expected to increase over time.

As of this morning at 11 AM, 64 community pharmacies had already completed their enrollment on the CDC's HPoP portal to be able to receive oral antivirals and another ~ 100 pharmacies are “in process.”

A course of treatment for molnupiravir will be five days: 40 capsules, with the patient taking 4 pills twice daily. Paxlovid by Pfizer is also a five-day course of treatment with dose of 300mg (Two 150mg tablets) of Paxlovid with one 100mg tablet of ritonavir, given twice daily for five days. Reimbursement to the pharmacy –for assessment, for prescribing, for dispensing—is still to be determined.

LIPA’s primary liaison with LDH is Ruth Kennedy, our COVID Coordinator. She can be reached via e-mail at [kennedy@lipa.org](mailto:kennedy@lipa.org) or via phone/text at 225-241-1437.

### **Pediatric and Adolescent COVID Vaccine Updates**

- Boosters Approved for 16 and 17-Year Olds -Yesterday (12/9) the FDA authorized COVID boosters for 16 and 17-year-olds and stated that data shows increased protection with the booster against the Omicron variant.
- Rollout of Vaccine for Younger Children Lags in Louisiana- OPH Assistant Secretary Kimberly Hood is quoted in a December 9<sup>th</sup> **Wall Street Journal** [story](#) [requires paid subscription to view] regarding the slow roll-out of COVID vaccine (ages 5-11) in some states, including Louisiana. Ms. Hood indicated she believes that most parents can be convinced to get their children vaccinated and that Louisiana is trying to make headway. She said “we do believe there’s a moveable middle that just wants information. While Louisiana vaccine rate for children is low, we are ahead of Texas and Alabama according to this December 1<sup>st</sup> [NBC News story and map](#)
- Medicaid Reimbursement for Pediatric Vaccine Counseling- In case you missed it last week, CMS announced last week that they are requiring that **every** state Medicaid program reimburse providers for children and youth COVID 19 vaccine counseling visits in which healthcare providers talk to families about the importance of vaccines. CMS will also require that states cover stand-alone vaccine counseling visits related to all pediatric vaccines under the EPSDT benefit. These state expenditures will be matched at the state’s regular federal medical assistance percentage. Our federal partner, NCPA, is closely monitoring and advocating for the role of community pharmacies and we are awaiting more details, expected by mid-January.

### **Plan Ahead for COVID Vaccine . . . And What to Do if You Run Short**

Some of you saw delays in receiving your COVID vaccine orders over the Thanksgiving holidays. LDH sent an e-mail this week urging providers to plan ahead for the Christmas/New Year holidays as no direct ship Pfizer/Mckesson orders will be delivered Thursday, December 23rd-Monday, December 27th. The last day to place an order to ensure direct ship delivery before Christmas will be Friday, December 17th. Orders placed after this date will be delivered Tuesday, December 28th-Wednesday, December 29th. Any order placed after December 28th will be delivered after the 1st of the year.

Morris & Dickson deliveries will be made on Monday, December 20th-Wednesday, December 22nd. Orders placed after December 22nd will be delivered on Monday, December 27th-

Wednesday, December 29th. Orders placed December 28th will be delivered after the 1st of the year.

If you run short of COVID Vaccine, check with us! While LIPA does not administer COVID vaccines, we are enrolled with the Louisiana Immunization Program as a redistribution site a may be able to help. We have access to LINKSorder and store Moderna & both Pfizer vaccines [we even have 15 doses of J&J on hand] and can transfer out vaccine and get it to you.