



Prescription assistance on the way for state incarcerates with mental health disorders.

Many Iowans are familiar with the Iowa Medication Voucher Program. This initiative enables Iowans in need of assistance to receive a 90-day prescription from a limited formulary for \$3 or free if the co-pay is waived by the pharmacist. (Participant eligibility requirements, a list of participating pharmacies, and the limited 90-day prescription formulary can be found at www.iowapdc.org. Click "Medication Voucher Program.")

The Iowa Prescription Drug Corporation (IPDC) is working with the Iowa Department of Corrections to expand this program to serve incarcerates with mental disorders transitioning out of the State Corrections system. Currently state offenders with chronic illnesses who leave the prison system are given a 30-day supply of medications. Thirty days is often not an adequate length of time for an offender to establish a source of continuous medication therapy. Discontinuing many types of psychiatric medications can lead to the underlying illness or illnesses no longer being under control, an outcome of which could lead to the individual reoffending. The expansion of the Iowa Medication Voucher Program will provide an additional 60 days of mental health prescription drug coverage for transitioning incarcerates. The additional time is essential to allow a released offender to locate a medical provider, be evaluated, and receive financial assistance – all of which is necessary to create a stable environment outside of the prison system.

IPDC has facilitated a series of work sessions with the Iowa Department of Corrections Pharmacy, the Iowa Pharmacy Association, the University of Iowa - College of Pharmacy, Hy-Vee, Dahl's and independent community pharmacies to develop a framework for the program. Program structure will include the following:

- **Eligibility:** Any incarcerate released with a diagnosed mental health disorder that is a resident of Iowa, has an individual/household income 200% of the federal poverty level or below, and does not have existing prescription coverage or health insurance that would cover the prescribed medication(s) will be eligible.
- **Release:** Individuals will be given a 30-day supply of all current medications from the Iowa DOC Pharmacy. Eligible prescriptions will be transferred to a participating local pharmacy (30-day prescription with one 30-day refill.)
- **Prescriptions:** Prescriptions will be filled at any of the 329 pharmacies across the state currently participating in the Medication Voucher program.
- **Reimbursement:** Pharmacies will be reimbursed for filling the 30-day prescription or 30-day refill at the current Medicaid reimbursement rate (State Maximum Allowable Cost).
- **Electronic Voucher Submittal:** An online portal is being developed that will allow pharmacies to electronically submit voucher claims for both the Iowa Department of Corrections and the 90-day limited formulary voucher program.

The goal of the initiative is to positively impact the rate of recidivism among state offenders with severe mental disorders by providing critical prescription drugs to a high risk population. Reducing the rate of recidivism among state offenders with mental health disorders could result in very significant cost savings to the State of Iowa. The results of the initiative will be documented in a study analyzing the rate of recidivism among program participants. The initiative to serve transitioning state incarcerates will be launched in the spring of 2012. Please stay tuned for more program details including the expanded mental health formulary and effective program dates.