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Drug Manufacturers Urged to Collaborate with Health Care Nonprofits on New \$10 Million Initiative

Pharmaceutical industry solicited nonprofits' logos and endorsement but not input

Oakland, CA— Nonprofit organizations throughout the state are calling upon the pharmaceutical industry to begin collaborating with health care providers on its \$10 million effort to increase prescription drug access for low-income Californians.

“We’re surprised and disappointed that the industry hasn’t used the state’s nonprofit health care providers as a resource to help design this initiative,” says Kathryn Duke, program director for the Medicine for People in Need (Medpin) program of California’s Public Health Institute.

Gov. Schwarzenegger announced earlier this year that the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) had committed \$10 million to help connect low-income Californians to free and low-cost medication assistance programs. More recently, PhRMA began requesting promotional help from major nonprofit organizations that work with clinics serving the poorest patients in California.

“PhRMA solicited nonprofit clinics’ logos and endorsement, but did not seek our input to make its effort more effective,” says Carmela Castellano, executive director of the California Primary Care Association, which represents more than 600 nonprofit community clinics and health centers in California.

Clinics can share valuable information to help PhRMA members improve the accessibility of their patient assistance programs, notes Paul Drogichen, director of pharmaceutical services for the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County. “Some programs have burdensome application requirements or change without notice.”

Nonprofit health care organizations question whether PhRMA will make the most effective use of the information gathered from its new initiative. “How will PhRMA judge whether its \$10 million expenditure in California has been successful? Will anyone outside of the industry have access to its assessment data? These are the kinds of questions we’d like to discuss,” says Duke.

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