

## Position Statement on Pharmacy Benefit Management/ Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs)

Approved by the Board of Trustees, 2002

"Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees...These are...position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects..." – *APA Operations Manual*.

- The APA opposes switching medications (often referred to as “therapeutic substitution) without the approval of the treating physician. This does not apply to generic substitution.
- APA opposes fail-first policies. Fail-first policies are ones that require physicians to prescribe one—or even two—formulary drugs and have them fail before they are permitted to prescribe from outside the formulary.
- APA advocates that PBMs provide an “easy pass” to physician specialists prescribing medications within their specialty. This easy pass would allow specialists to by-pass some of the authorization mechanisms that may, for example, exclude higher than usual dosages of a drug or a larger number of refills. This system has been in practice for years with specialties such as infectious diseases. In the case of psychiatry, an easy pass would allow psychiatrists wider latitude when prescribing psychotropics.
- APA advocates that psychiatrists must be included in formulary review boards that are reviewing psychotropic agents. Inclusion of a PharmD with certification in psychopharmacology does not sufficiently meet this need.
- All participants on formulary review boards should be required to give full disclosure of any conflict of interest, including financial incentives.