



**Washington
Association for
Community Health**
Community Health Centers
Advancing Quality Care for All

November 26, 2024

Jane Beyer
Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner
302 Sid Snyder Ave, SW
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: WSR 24-21-158 Health Care Benefit Managers

Dear Ms. Beyer:

The Washington Association for Community Health (“Association”) and its member community health centers (CHCs) appreciate this opportunity to comment on WSR 24-21-158, concerning health care benefit managers (HCBMs), and on updating rules as required by ESSB 5213. The Association represents our state’s network of 28 CHCs, which collectively provide comprehensive primary care, dental care, behavioral health care, and pharmacy services to over 1.25 million patients annually. Many CHCs in Washington State operate pharmacies to provide patients with affordable access to necessary prescription medications.

The Association and our membership CHCs strongly agree that fair and transparent business practices of health care benefit managers and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) are vital to delivering high-quality care for our patients and communities. Discriminatory contracting and business practices by PBMs prevent CHCs from providing the full range of services that our patients rely upon. For example, CHCs have reported receiving lower reimbursement rates compared to affiliate pharmacies for dispensing the same prescription drug. CHCs have also reported fluctuations in reimbursements for claims of the same brand drug over a single contracted period. In these instances, PBMs have contended that reimbursements average out over the contracted period. Instead, these discriminatory practices interfere with CHCs’ abilities to consistently serve patients. We appreciate the addition of WAC 284-180-501 and the intention to ensure fair reimbursement on a per unit basis.

Generally, the Association supports the proposed rules to implement ESSB 5213. The proposed rules will provide additional oversight and transparency, a clear appeals process, and tools to prevent discriminatory business practices that limit patient access to prescription medications. Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on these proposed rules. If you have any questions, please contact me and our director of policy by email at bmarsalli@wacommunityhealth.org and apatrick@wacommunityhealth.org.

Sincerely,
Bob Marsalli

Chief Executive Officer
Washington Association for Community Health

