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The College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP) appreciates the opportunity to provide comment to the CMS Innovation Center's Behavioral Health Payment and Care Delivery summit on 9/8/17. We believe that psychiatric pharmacists are an important part of the solution to improving access, quality, and cost of behavioral health care.

CPNP is a professional association of more than 2,200 members who envision a world where all individuals living with mental illness, including those with substance use and neurologic disorders, receive safe, appropriate, and effective treatment. Most members are specialty pharmacists and Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacists (BCPPs) who specialize in psychiatry, addiction, psychopharmacology, and neurology. CPNP's mission is to advance the reach and practice of psychiatric pharmacy and serve as the voice of the specialty.

Psychiatric pharmacists are residency-trained, board certified pharmacists who are experts in the use of medications for behavioral health conditions. Psychiatric pharmacists apply a unique skill set to work collaboratively with other members of the health care team with a focus on optimizing medications including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, and supplements, to ensure that they are appropriate, effective, safe, and can be taken as intended.

With a significant psychiatric workforce shortage in the United States, adding psychiatric pharmacists to the health care team increases the capacity of the system to care for more patients with psychiatric and substance use disorders¹. Psychiatric pharmacists can help with improvements in patient symptoms, increased medication adherence rates, increased patient satisfaction, and the potential to reduce health care costs². The biggest barrier has been lack of payment for patient care services. Pharmacists are not recognized as a Medicare Part B provider, although some state Medicaid programs are now paying advanced practice pharmacists for direct patient care services³.

Pharmacists are the most underutilized healthcare professionals in the United States. Adding psychiatric pharmacists to the interprofessional team can improve outcomes, increase access to care, and be part of the solution in addressing the workforce shortage.

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References:

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3. Montana Healthcare Programs Notice <https://medicaidprovider.mt.gov/Portals/68/docs/providernotices/2017/provnotice2744025556ClinicalPharmacistPractitioner07032017.pdf>

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