

GOVERNOR WOLF VETOES DRUG FORMULARY BILL

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On April 27, 2018, Governor Tom Wolf vetoed the Drug Formulary Bill (Senate Bill 936) that passed in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives on April 16, 2018. The Bill would have required the Bureau of Workers' Compensation to use a formulary to determine the reasonableness and necessity of prescription pain medication.

The governor's veto was prefaced by an April 26, 2018, press release, announcing his plan to take executive action against the opioid crisis. According to that release, the administration will attempt to limit the overprescribing of prescription opioids in the workers' compensation system by doing the following:

- Create prescription guidelines for opioids in workers' compensation via the creation of a Safe Effective Prescribing Task Force;
- Provide awareness training for workers' compensation judges and providers regarding utilization of opioids;
- Support Senate Bill 655, which calls for regulatory action for statewide prescribing guidelines, and Senate Bill 472, which would limit opioid prescriptions to no more than seven days, except for patients with chronic or unique pain scenarios;
- Call for a review on all opioid prescriptions within the State Workers' Insurance Fund.

In addition, the press release says that the governor's administration will support limitation of overly-expensive opioid treatments by

having the Department of Labor and Industry, through its regulatory authority, propose regulations requiring opioid compound prescriptions to be billed at the ingredient level. The administration also plans to continue its existing interventions to address opioid abuse by continuing to monitor opioid prescriptions in the workers' compensation system through the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program database; identifying medical fee review applications that indicate overprescribing of opioids and reporting those providers to the Department of State for investigation; and promoting Certified Safety Committees by offering a 5% premium discount for employers that participate. II



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