

Pharmacy Regulation in Connecticut

Background

The practice of pharmacy is regulated at both the federal and state levels of government. The focus of state pharmacy laws is to protect the public health of its citizens by ensuring individuals who practice pharmacy are competent and drugs are properly and safely stored.

The Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) and the Commission of Pharmacy have broad responsibilities in overseeing the pharmaceutical marketplace. Through its Drug Control Division, the department enforces the Pharmacy Practice Act, the State Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act and the State Controlled Substances Act. The Connecticut Commission of Pharmacy, consisting of six members appointed by the governor, approves the licensure and registration of pharmacies, pharmacists, pharmacy interns and pharmacy technicians, and conducts hearings and imposes sanctions when appropriate. As of March 2004, the number of entities regulated by DCP is: pharmacies - 616; non-resident pharmacies - 288; pharmacists – 4,368; and pharmacy technicians – 3,727.

Pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) are fiscal intermediaries that specialize in administering and managing prescription drug benefit plans on behalf of plan sponsors. A PBM can be an independent company or a subsidiary of a retail pharmacy chain or health insurance company.

Area of Focus

The study would focus on the operations of the Department of Consumer Protection and the Commission of Pharmacy and their authority to regulate the practice of pharmacy given the changes in the pharmaceutical marketplace over the past decade. The study would also examine pharmacy benefit managers to determine if Connecticut state government adequately regulates their activities.

Areas of Analysis

A. Practice of Pharmacy

1. Identify federal laws and other federal provisions that limit the state's authority to regulate pharmacies and the activities of pharmacists.
2. Review scope of statutory and regulatory authority of DCP and the Commission on Pharmacy including applicable licensing and registration provisions.
3. Describe regulatory activities including inspections, complaints, investigations, disciplinary actions, and consumer education.
4. Compare the statutory authority of other states to regulate pharmacies, pharmacists, and technicians.

B. Pharmacy Benefit Managers

1. Identify existing federal and state laws regulating the activities of PBMs.
2. Describe the activities of PBMs.
3. Examine how other states regulate PBMs.