

IMAGES OF HEALING AND LEARNING

Dirty Laundry: Drug Formulary Exclusions

Artwork and caption by Katy Giebenhain, MA, MPhil



Figure 1. Detail of *Dirty Laundry: Drug Formulary Exclusions*, by Katy Giebenhain

Caption

Pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) contracted by health insurance companies create lists or “formularies” of preferred medications they cover. In this artwork, information from such formulary lists supplied the source of the text. This practice of charging patients the full cost for medications, devices, or monitoring aids that are excluded from their health insurance companies’ coverage plans undermines decision-making partnerships between physicians and patients. An ethically relevant irony explored here is that in the United States we seem to have more choice about, and access to, breakfast cereals and assault rifles than needed medications.

Editor’s Note

Four lines of text appearing in *Dirty Laundry* are contextualized as follows: *Note to existing members: This formulary has changed since last year* and *Please bring this guide with you the next time you visit your doctor* and similar language appears in numerous web-based

sources of information about formulary lists. *If you choose to remain on your current medication, you may use any retail pharmacy and should expect to pay the full cost of those prescriptions appears on the CVS/caremark™ website [1]. Please review the Formulary Drug Removals in the link below. This contains a list of drugs that will no longer be covered on your drug list. This means you will pay the full price if you continue with any of these drugs also appears on the CVS/caremark website [2].*

References

1. CVS/caremark. 2015 Advance formulary list: frequently asked questions. <https://www2.caremark.com/wfalternate/default.asp?save-me-money=CMS-PWCM-2040166>. Accessed May 5, 2017.
2. CVS/caremark. Your covered medicine list: check for updates that may affect your prescription cost. <http://info.caremark.com/druglist>. Accessed May 5, 2017.

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ISSN 2376-6980