

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



 AIMED ALLIANCE

Mission

Aimed Alliance is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit health policy organization. Our mission is to protect and enhance the rights of health care consumers and providers.

Vision

The vision of Aimed Alliance is a society in which consumers, in consultation with their health care providers and loved ones, can make informed and individually appropriate decisions about their health care, and those decisions are not overridden by third parties.

Beliefs

We believe that Americans should value their health care and prioritize it as consumers. We believe that health care industry stake holders should place the health and safety of patients above all other considerations. We believe that the costs of health care services should be reasonable and transparent.

Activities

Aimed Alliance seeks to achieve its mission through research and analysis, thought leadership, and organizational collaboration.

Key Staff



Shannon Ginnan, M.D.

As Director of Medical Affairs for Aimed Alliance, Shannon Ginnan, M.D., provides the organization and its partners with valuable insight from a practitioner's perspective and serves as a liaison to the medical and health care technology communities.



Stacey L. Worthy, Esq.

Stacey L. Worthy, Esq. serves as counsel to Aimed Alliance. She provides unique legal insight through research and analysis of laws, regulations, and legislation; provides counsel in support of advocacy initiatives; offers policy analysis and drafting; and supports allied organizations focused on advancing common goals. Ms. Worthy is a partner in a Washington, DC-based health law and policy firm.



John A. Wylam, Esq.

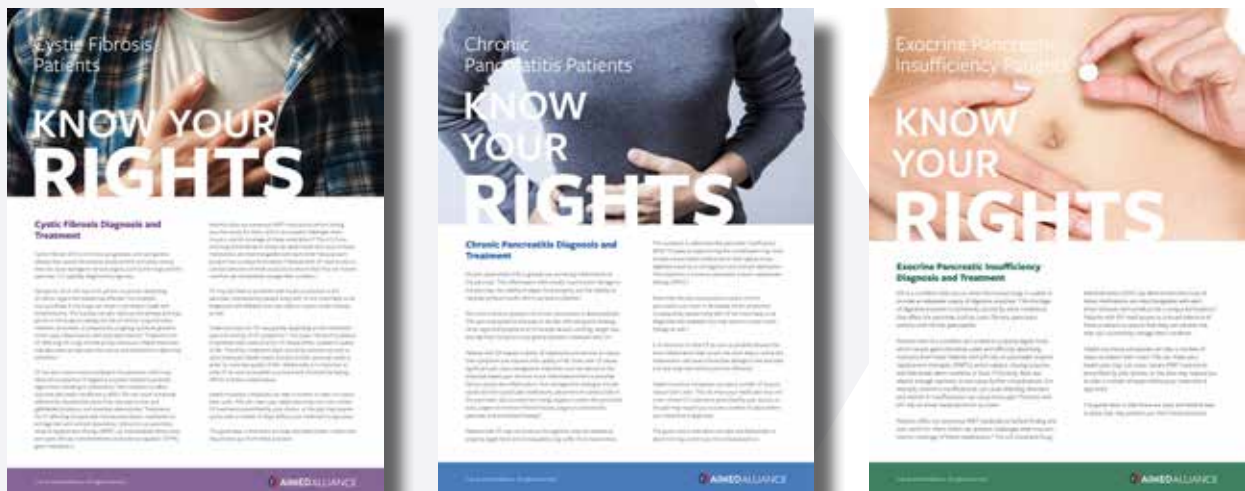
As staff attorney for Aimed Alliance, John Wylam conducts legal research and analysis, provides strategic recommendations, and drafts issue briefs, op-eds, press releases, and newsletters. Mr. Wylam also creates content for the Aimed Alliance website and assists the organization in developing policy positions and public statements on emerging issues.

Aimed Alliance's key staff is supported by a team of attorneys, policy advisors, communications advisors, administrative personnel, and other consultants.

Research & Analysis

AIMED ALLIANCE CONDUCTS RESEARCH AND PROVIDES ANALYSIS ON ITS POLICY PRIORITIES, INCLUDING REFORMING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM SO THAT ALL AMERICANS HAVE QUALITY HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE, IMPROVING PATIENT ACCESS TO QUALITY CARE, PRESERVING THE PRACTITIONER-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP, AND ADDRESSING THE DRIVERS OF HEALTH CARE COSTS. AIMED ALLIANCE'S FINDINGS CULMINATE IN REPORTS, FACT SHEETS, BROCHURES, LEGISLATIVE MAPS, AND COMMENTS TO GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES. OUR RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES IN 2019 INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

Brochures



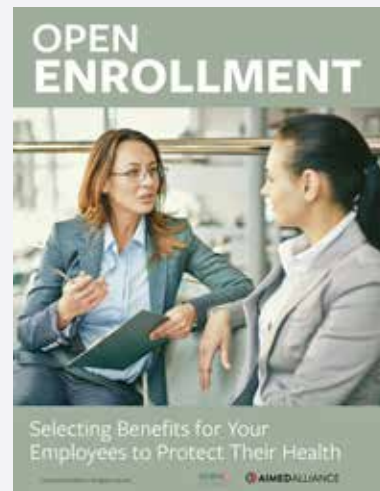
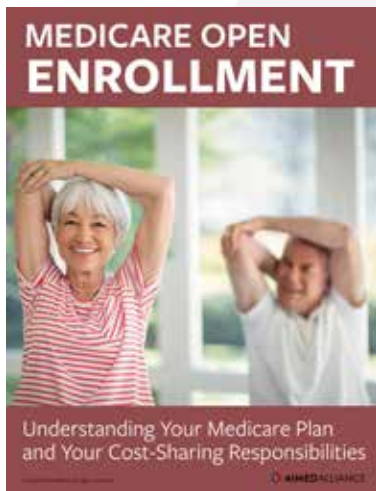
Know Your Rights: Cystic Fibrosis

Following the launch of the Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency Coalition (EPIC), Aided Alliance published Know Your Rights brochures for cystic fibrosis, chronic pancreatitis, and exocrine pancreatic insufficiency. These brochures include clinical information regarding diagnosis and treatment of these conditions, as well as information on common utilization management techniques with recommended strategies for patients to overcome these treatment barriers.



Misleading Messages: Appreciating the Dangers of “Bad Drug” Advertisements

In August, Aimed Alliance published a brochure designed to help consumers recognize and better understand advertisements from personal injury law firms that encourage viewers to join class action lawsuits involving certain medications or medical devices. The brochure provides an overview of potentially misleading practices that may be at play in these advertisements and advises consumers to consult their health care provider before discontinuing any medications or therapies.



Open Enrollment Guidance in Partnership with NORM

In October, Aimed Alliance published two brochures in partnership with the National Organization of Rheumatology Managers (NORM) that contains comprehensive guidance for enrolling in a health plan during open enrollment. One brochure is designed to provide guidance to Medicare beneficiaries in choosing a health plan and understanding their coverage. The second brochure is intended to assist employers and HR professionals during the benefits selection process and to provide them with objective information about health plan terms that affect their employees’ ability to access the treatments and services that they need.

Reports

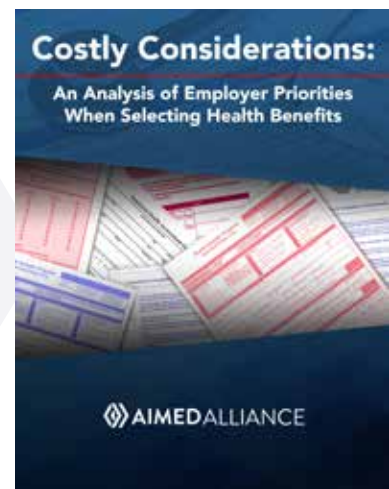
A Forced Hand: How Ohio Health Systems' Non-Medical Switching Policies Impact Physicians and Patients

This report found that hospitals in Ohio had instructed administrators to remove practitioner-administered medications from the hospitals' formulary, stop stocking medications in hospital pharmacies, and instruct practitioners to switch their patients' medications. The report also highlighted the lack of transparency of hospitals' appeals processes and the need for legislative reform to provide such transparency.



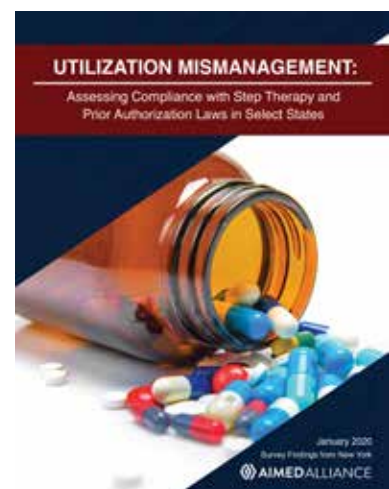
Costly Considerations: An Analysis of Employer Priorities When Selecting Health Benefits

Costly Considerations found that when selecting health benefits for their employees, HR professionals place the highest priority on providing robust access to care, followed by limiting the cost of health benefits. The report also found that employers are attempting to reduce health costs by shifting cost-sharing onto employees and offering plans that restrict access to treatment, including through copay accumulators and allowing negative formulary changes after the plan year has begun.



Utilization Mismatch: Assessing Compliance with Step Therapy and Prior Authorization Laws in Select States, Survey Findings from New York

Part one of this three-part series of reports presented the findings of a survey commissioned by Aimerd Alliance of health care practitioners in New York. The survey was designed to gauge health plans' compliance with prior authorization and step therapy laws in the state. It also assessed the degree to which health regulatory agencies are enforcing these new laws.



Fact Sheet Highlights

AIMED ALLIANCE REGULARLY SUPPLEMENTS RESEARCH WITH FOCUSED FACT SHEETS. BELOW ARE SOME OF OUR FACT SHEETS FROM 2019.



Reading the Tea (or Hemp) Leaves Post FDA Hearing

Following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) hearing on cannabidiol (CBD) products on May 31, 2019 and Aimerd Alliance's submission of a regulatory comment to the FDA on July 15, 2019, Aimerd Alliance published an informational one-pager to help consumers understand the FDA's role in regulating CBD products.



Copay Accumulators in the Workplace

In July, Aimerd Alliance published a one-pager assessing how frequently large employers are implementing copay accumulators in their health plans and providing examples of such policies in employer-sponsored health plans offered by Fortune 100 companies. This one-pager calls attention to the need for federal action to regulate copay accumulator programs, as new state laws do not apply to employer-sponsored plans governed by the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA).

Thought Leadership

USING ITS RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS, AIMED ALLIANCE DEVELOPS SOUND, PATIENT-CENTERED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS. REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE ORGANIZATION DISSEMINATE MESSAGES BY PRESENTING TO AUDIENCES OF PATIENTS, CAREGIVERS, ADVOCATES, PRACTITIONERS, ASSOCIATIONS, EMPLOYERS, HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS, INDUSTRY MEMBERS, AND POLICYMAKERS; AND ENGAGING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA.



Speaking Engagements

Aimed Alliance staff members regularly speak at conferences and other similar events. Below is a partial list of our speaking engagements from 2019.

- Headache and Migraine Policy Forum, Headache on the Hill, “Disability and Migraine Disease”
- CBI, Coupon and Copay Conference, “Analyze State and Federal Progress Regulating Copay Accumulator Programs and Patient Advocacy Response”
- HealthyWomen, Biosimilars & Women’s Health Forum, “Federal Legislative and Regulatory Updates”
- Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations, Health Policy Excellence Program, “Patient Power”
- National Foundation for Women Legislators, Annual Conference, “Improving Access to Health Care: 8 Timely Topics in 30 Minutes”
- Alliance for Balanced Pain Management, Summit on Balanced Pain Management, “Breaking Barriers: Access to Patient-Centered Pain Care”
- California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies, Annual Retreat, “Health Policy Update: Exploring Recent Federal Developments, Mental Health Parity, and Utilization Management Policies”

Op-Eds and News Articles

AIMED ALLIANCE PERIODICALLY AUTHORS OP-EDS, AND STAFF MEMBERS ARE OFTEN QUOTED IN NEWS ARTICLES, DISCUSSING ISSUES RELEVANT TO PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS.

In early 2019, Aimed Alliance made national headlines with its survey findings from its 2018 report: *Putting Profits Before Patients: Provider Perspectives on Health Insurance Barriers that Harm Patients*. Among other outlets, this report appeared on StudyFinds.org , Drudge Report, Newsmax , and Daily Mail .

StudyFinds Research studies first.

Jan 28, 2019, Article (quoted),
StudyFinds.org
Survey: Half of Doctors Considering Leaving Medicine – Because Of Health Insurance Headaches



DRUDGE REPORT

Jan 28, 2019, Article,
DrudgeReport.com
Half of Doctors Considering Leaving Medicine...



Other 2019 media coverage includes:



January 17, 2019, Article (quoted), ConsumerReports.com
What to Do When Your Insurer Won't Cover Free Preventive Care



February 21, 2019, Article (mentioned), CrainsCleveland.com
New Health Care Policies are Putting Ohio Diabetes Patients at Risk



April 13, 2019, Article (mentioned), AJMC.com
5 Things About the Impact of Migraine on Work and Health



April 28, 2019, Op-ed, HR News
Copay Accumulator Programs a Bad Choice for Reducing Employers' Health Care Costs



May 27 & 31, 2019, Articles (quoted), PatientPower.info
**What Can I Do If an Insurer Refuses to Pay for My Cancer Treatment or Services?
What Can I Do About Employment Discrimination Due to Cancer?**



July 16, 2019, Op-ed (quoted), NaturalProductsInsider.com
CBD Manufacturers Help Create Path for Legal, Safe Products



July 25, 2019, Article (quoted), Cleveland.com
Ohio Doctors, Patients Frustrated by Policy that Requires Switching Medications: Survey Finds



August 1, 2019, Article (quoted), EHSToday.com
Dank Dilemma: The Unregulated CBD Market and Drug Testing



October 8, 2019, Op-ed, Dispatch.com
Column: Ohio's Health Systems Put Their Own Patients at Risk



December 18, 2019, Article (quoted), BenefitsPro.com
Employees Feeling the Pressure of Balancing Act Between Health Coverage and Cost



December 24, 2019, Article (quoted), TimesUnion.com
Survey: NY Providers Say Insurers Still Block, Delay Preferred Care

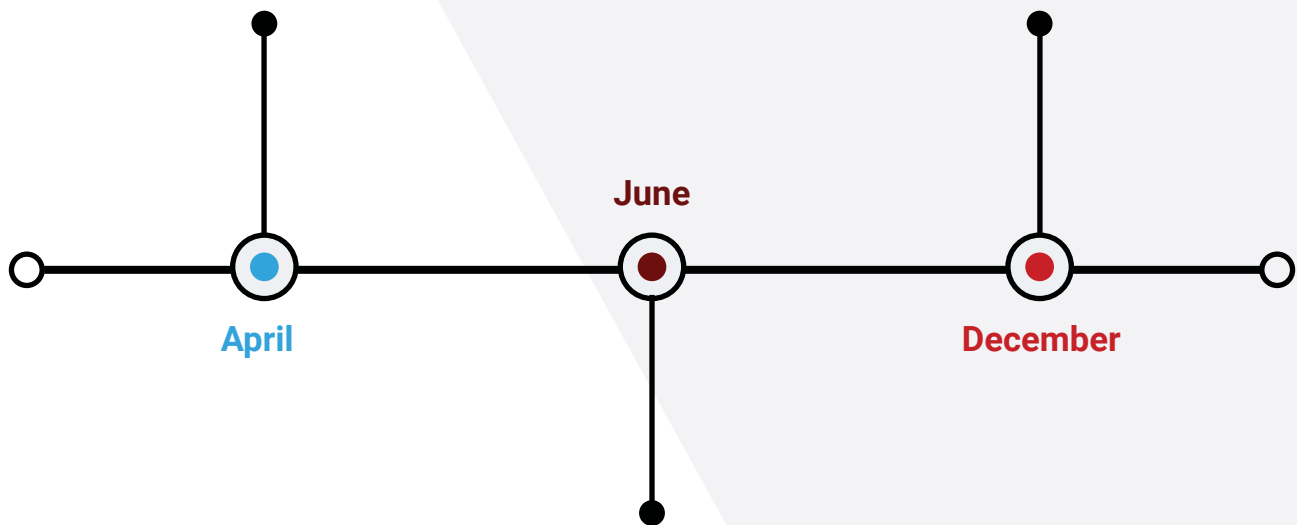
Organizational Collaboration

AIMED ALLIANCE PARTNERS WITH LIKE-MINDED ORGANIZATIONS WHOSE MISSIONS ALIGN WITH OUR EFFORTS. AIMED ALLIANCE ADVANCES THIS ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION BY PARTICIPATING IN COALITIONS AND SHARING IDEAS AT MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES. IN 2019, ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:



Launch of EPIC, a group of organizations jointly advocating in the interest of patients with exocrine pancreatic insufficiency (EPI).

Roundtable meeting of New York patient advocates who have advocated for step therapy and consumer protection reforms.



Aimed Alliance convened a meeting of patient advocates from a diverse network of organizations to discuss their current policy and advocacy priorities and ways our organizations can work together.

EPIC

AIMED ALLIANCE PUBLISHED A SERIES OF VIDEOS FEATURING MEMBERS OF EPIC. THESE VIDEOS EMPHASIZED HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR PATIENTS LIVING WITH EPI TO HAVE ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE TREATMENTS AND SERVICES TO MAINTAIN GOOD HEALTH.



Outreach



5 Issue-Focused Videos Produced

15

Complaints & Outreach to Payers Regarding Patient Access to Care



6 Webinars

11

State Policy Tracking Maps

8

Letters to State & Federal Lawmakers in Response to Legislation

6

Complaints to State Regulatory Agencies



17 Speaking Engagements

53

Letters to State and Federal Regulators in Response to Policy Issues



523 Twitter Followers

104

Letters to Large Employers in Response to Policy Issues



147 Facebook Followers



39 Supporting Organizations

12

Newsletters



630 Newsletter Recipients

10

Comments to Regulatory Agencies in Response to Proposed & Final Rules and Regulations



14 Op-Eds & Articles



6 Fact Sheets & Reports

Outreach Highlights

Copay Accumulator Advocacy

On October 7, 2019, Aimed Alliance sent a Petition for Rulemaking to the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Treasury regarding an FAQ document. The FAQ stated that a provision of the Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2020 (NBPP) regarding copay accumulators would not be enforced due to a perceived conflict between the NBPP and an Internal Revenue Service guidance from 2004. Aimed Alliance argued that the two did not conflict and that the NBPP should be enforced. On October 23, 2019, representatives from each of the agencies joined Aimed Alliance in a conference call to provide their response to the petition and engage in an open dialogue.

Letter to Multi-State Health Plan Regarding Discrimination Against Providers

On May 14, 2019, Aimed Alliance contacted a multi-state health plan in the Midwest to inform it that its policy of refusing to cover prescriptions written by physician assistants or nurse practitioners unless they are signed by a board-certified physician could violate state and federal law. On June 14, 2019, the health plan responded, but it continued to deny claims. Aimed Alliance sent complaints to attorneys general and insurance commissioners in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, which resulted in an investigation into the plan's practices.

EPIC Letter to a PBM Regarding Non-Medical Switching of PERTs

Aimed Alliance learned that a national PBM engaged in non-medical switching by rescinding coverage for a pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT) in the middle of the plan year. This forced patients with EPI who were taking that medication to switch to an alternative. On July 22, 2019, Aimed Alliance sent a letter to the PBM, urging it to allow patients to access the medication. Following conversations with the PBM's Chief Medical Officer, the PBM agreed to change its policy and allow pediatric patients to access the medication, even after reaching adulthood.

Health System Letter Regarding Non-Medical Switching of Biologic Medications

Aimed Alliance first wrote to a health system calling attention to its non-medical switching practices in December 2018 in a sign-on letter joined by 11 other organizations. A follow-up letter was sent to the health system on August 26, 2019. In this letter, Aimed Alliance highlighted the findings of *A Forced Hand: How Ohio Health Systems' Non-Medical Switching Policies Impact Physicians and Patients* and emphasized the harms caused by non-medical switching. The health system then agreed to end its non-medical switching practices.

Outreach to State Attorneys General Regarding "Bad Drug" Advertisements

Following the publication of *Misleading Messages: Appreciating the Dangers of "Bad Drug" Advertisements*, Aimed Alliance mailed copies of the brochure to attorneys general in each of the 50 states and D.C. to heighten awareness of "bad drug" advertisements and to illustrate how they can be harmful to health care consumers. In response to this outreach, several attorneys general replied and expressed gratitude for receiving the brochure and being notified about the issue.

Maps of Active Legislation & Enacted Laws



Aimed Alliance actively maintained pages on the Aired Alliance website that provided up-to-date information on enacted laws and legislation for the public regarding association health plans, copay accumulators, non-medical switching, prior authorization, short-term limited-duration insurance plans, and step therapy.

Health Care Reform Litigation Monitoring

In December, Aired Alliance published information on the Aired Alliance website that included up-to-date information regarding ongoing lawsuits involving health care reform, such as challenges to the ACA; short-term, limited duration insurance plans; association health plans; and Medicaid work requirements. This information includes case histories, summaries of the events that led to each case being filed, descriptions of major decisions in each case, and how the outcome of each case could impact consumers.

Know Your Rights

Aimed Alliance maintains the Know Your Rights initiative at www.coveragerights.org. This initiative includes state-by-state instructions for consumers on how to appeal adverse benefit determinations if their treatment or services have been denied.



Looking Ahead

Aimed Alliance accomplished more than ever in 2019 while working to protect and enhance the rights of health care consumers and providers.

In 2020, Aimed Alliance will build upon these achievements with new projects that advance the interests of health care consumers and providers nationwide.

Our 2020 efforts will include continued outreach to employers regarding employee health benefits; ongoing tracking of active legislation, enacted laws, and health care reform lawsuits; and projects focused on access to care, discrimination against providers or in the workplace, copay accumulators, mental health, CBD regulation, health data privacy, and value-based initiatives.

To stay abreast of our health policy activities, sign up for our monthly newsletter at aimedalliance.org/newsletters, and follow us on social media:

 @AimedAlliance

 facebook.com/aimedalliance

 linkedin.com/company/aimedalliance



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