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Marci Wood, Editor

Vermont News

Vermont Man Pleads Guilty to Pharmacy Robbery

Matthew Martin has pleaded guilty to robberies of banks in Vermont in New Hampshire, and a pharmacy in Bellows Falls. Prosecutors said Thursday that Martin, who is from the Springfield area, will be sentenced to 15 years in prison.

[Read more](#)

Upcoming Board of Pharmacy Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Pharmacy will be held at 9 AM on Wednesday, November 23rd. The meeting will be held on the 3rd floor of the City Center, 89 Main Street in Montpelier.

National Pharmacy News

FDA Issues Warning on Certain Hepatitis C Medications

The FDA is requiring a Boxed Warning that alerts health care professionals and patients about the risk of hepatitis B virus reactivation in patients treated with direct-acting antiviral medications for chronic hepatitis C infections. A total of 24 cases of hepatitis B reactivation have been reported to the FDA between November 2013 and July 2016. Reactivation has led to death in two patients and a liver transplant in one patient. This is likely an underestimation of the number of cases, as these are only ones that have been reported to the FDA. Reactivation usually occurred within 4-8 weeks of receiving treatment for hepatitis C. Patients with hepatitis B co-infection were excluded from clinical trials submitted when these hepatitis C agents were approved, therefore reactivation was not seen in these trials as a possible effect of treatment. Health care professionals are advised to screen all patients for potential past or current hepatitis B infection prior to treating chronic hepatitis C with these medications.

[Read more](#)

Cigna Corp. Will No Longer Require Prior Authorization Requirement For Opioid Addiction Drugs

By Madeline Ciccone

Cigna has removed its prior authorization requirement for opioid addiction medications, such as buprenorphine, in an effort to "address concerns about barriers to treatment," according to New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman. Cigna Corp. will stop requiring that patients and doctors "jump through hoops" to receive proper medical care to treat opioid addiction. Studies show that opioid addiction treatment drugs like buprenorphine reduce illicit opioid use and show patient compliance with counseling and other forms of non-pharmacologic treatments, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Cigna's policy change has been described as "an extremely positive development that will literally be lifesaving" by associate professor of psychiatry in addiction medicine, John Kelly, at Harvard Medical School.

[Read more](#)

Bringing Attention to Patients and Physicians About Cheap Alternatives to Expensive Brand-Name Combination Drugs

By Madeline Ciccone

GoodRx, a group that compares pharmacy prices for prescription drugs, found that the active ingredients of many expensive combination brand-name drugs may be purchased separately with generic active ingredients at a fraction of the cost. For example, the migraine medication, Treximent (sumatriptan/naproxen sodium) costs \$728.67 for a box of nine tablets while the price for nine tablets of its ingredients, sumatriptan and naproxen, is \$19. Other examples include acne cream Acanya, rheumatoid pain medication Duexis, and Qsymia for weight loss. Many patients and physicians have no idea that a cheaper alternative to expensive brands exists.

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Auvi-Q Set to Return to Market

The manufacturer of Auvi-Q, an alternative epinephrine auto-injector, has announced the product will return to the market in 2017 after it was removed last year due to reports the device did not deliver proper doses of epinephrine. Kaleo then obtained the rights to the product from Sanofi, and has since been working to safely get the product back on the market. It is unclear if Auvi-Q's return to the market will augment prices of either product, especially considering Auvi-Q was more expensive than EpiPen prior to its removal. Mylan's plan to introduce a generic EpiPen alternative by the end of this year may further lower the price of similar products.

[Read more](#)

FDA Adds Warning Prescription Testosterone Products

The FDA has approved class-wide labeling changes that warn of the risks associated with abuse and dependence for all prescription testosterone products. The new warning contains information about the abuse potential of testosterone and serious adverse events relating to heart and mental health that have been reported in case reports and other published literature. The labeling will also include information in the Warning and Precautions section recommending to measure serum testosterone concentrations if abuse is suspected.

[Read more](#)

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