



Department of Health

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

SALLY DRESLIN, M.S., R.N.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

May 20, 2015

Dear Provider:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New York State Department of Health (Department) are working together to curb the overprescribing of antimicrobial agents.

Recently, the Department performed an analysis of statewide adult outpatient Medicaid claims data from 2013. Based upon this analysis, **your practice has been identified as being located in an area of New York State that has an unexpectedly high rate of potentially avoidable antibiotic prescribing.** Please see the enclosed map.

The Department analysis was modeled after a national review of antimicrobial drug use among adult Medicaid patients presenting with upper respiratory tract infections¹. Statewide, 45% of patients filled an antibiotic prescription after a simple diagnosis of acute respiratory tract infection (i.e. primary diagnosis of cold, upper respiratory tract infection, or acute bronchitis without antibiotic-appropriate secondary diagnoses). We understand that administrative data do not always provide a complete and accurate reflection of a patient's clinical presentation; some prescriptions included in this database undoubtedly were appropriate. However, this kind of bias should not vary much by geographic region, so the antibiotic prescribing rates remain a concern.

The Department is now participating in CDC's "Get Smart (Know When Antibiotics Work)" program aimed at improving appropriate use of antimicrobial agents. To that end, the Department would like to enlist your help in our efforts:

We will shortly be sending your practice CDC's "Get Smart" printed educational materials (posters, brochures) on appropriate antibiotic prescribing. Please consider displaying them in patient areas at your facility. Some providers indicate they feel pressure from patients to prescribe antibiotics even when they are not indicated; these materials might help educate patients. The material also will include "viral prescription pads" which have been popular among prescribers in other areas. Additional materials may be obtained via CDC's "Get Smart" web page: <http://www.cdc.gov/getsmart/campaign-materials/print-materials.html>


If appropriate antibiotic prescribing is a matter of particular interest to you, we invite you to serve as one of our local opinion leaders and spread the word to peers about appropriate antibiotic prescribing in your facility or community. We would be pleased to assist you by

¹ Li P, Metlay JP, Marcus SC, Doshi JA. Factors associated with antimicrobial drug use in Medicaid programs. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2014;20(5):829-32.

providing educational materials or a PowerPoint slide set. Please contact Mary Beth Wenger at marybeth.wenger@health.ny.gov or call (518) 474-1036.

We thank you in advance for your partnership in this important matter.

Sincerely,


Howard A. Zucker, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner of Health

Enclosure