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Information Bulletin #020

To All Members of the PCRB:

**Re: New Prescription Drugs Report Highlights Decreasing Overall Use Among
Workers Compensation Claims in Pennsylvania**

Fewer workers compensation claims are involving prescription drugs according to a new report from the Pennsylvania Compensation Rating Bureau (PCRB), *Prescription Drug Trends in Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation: 2012-2022*. This comprehensive analysis offers critical insights into the evolving landscape of prescription drug usage and costs within the state's workers' compensation system.

The report reveals significant trends, including a noticeable overall decrease in claims involving drug prescriptions, particularly those involving opioids. Once hailed as essential for pain management, opioids have been linked to an alarming rise in addiction and overdose deaths in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Health has acknowledged an "opioid crisis," prompting a necessary reevaluation of prescribing practices.

"Our new report sheds light on the progress made in addressing the opioid crisis while also highlighting the increased use of generic drugs," says Bill Taylor, President of the PCRB. "The data not only reflects Pennsylvania's commitment to improving outcomes for injured workers but also emphasizes the importance of managing costs for employers and insurers."

The study also identifies a significant rise in the prescription of generic medications, which are more affordable alternatives to brand-name drugs. This shift contributes to cost savings without compromising safety or effectiveness, as generic drugs must meet the same rigorous FDA standards.

Additionally, legislative actions from a decade ago that curtailed drug reimbursement contributed to reductions in prescription payments and utilization, but increases among topical prescriptions have driven a recent uptick.

"*Prescription Drug Trends in Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation: 2012-2022* is a vital resource for employers, insurers, and policymakers aiming to understand the current dynamics of prescription drug usage in the state," says Taylor. "By harnessing the insights provided,

stakeholders can make informed decisions that enhance the well-being of injured workers while promoting cost-effective practices.”

For more information and to access the full report, please visit pcrb.com.

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