

April 24, 2023

david.cordani@cigna.com

David Cordani
Chairman and CEO
Cigna
900 Cottage Grove Road
Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002

Dear Mr. Cordani –

As the Chair and CEO of Cigna, you lead one of the world’s biggest healthcare companies – one that proclaims on its website to be “dedicated to improving the health and vitality of those we serve.” How can Cigna make this boast when its own pharmacy benefits manager, Express Scripts, is ripping apart the healthcare system through its rapacious, self-serving, member-unfriendly practices?

- ESI actively drives pharmacies out of its networks through reimbursements that don’t even cover a pharmacy’s drug costs, let alone the costs associated with dispensing the drugs and consulting with patients. This predatory practice is contributing to the bankruptcy of independent pharmacies and to the creation of pharmacy deserts, leaving members stranded.
- ESI is hopelessly conflicted – preferring to drive pharmacy benefit to its own specialty mail order pharmacy Accredo than broker honest deals with competing pharmacies. Members with chronic diseases like HIV suffer because when forced into mail order, they lose their tie with their trusted pharmacy care team member and are thrown into an anonymous service that often doesn’t understand the sensitivities around serving people with HIV.
- ESI operates secret, offshore entities like Ascent Health Services, apparently to negotiate sweet deals with manufacturers that only profit ESI/Ascent.
- ESI creates so-called quality performance programs, which essentially are rigged “pay to play” schemes.

AHF is a nonprofit that has been caring for people living with HIV for more than 35 years. Our healthcare centers treat 56,000 people living with HIV in the US. Every year, ESI jeopardizes that care through its oppressive and arbitrary practices. How does ESI expect pharmacies to survive under this reign of terror and still “improve the health and vitality of” their Cigna members? Cynically, ESI has no such expectation.

PBMs are rightly under public scrutiny for their greed. Cigna and ESI recently launched a campaign to tout ESI’s new “transparency” initiatives, but none of these measures are aimed at the abuses I mention above that impact pharmacies and patients every day. None address the deep, structural issues with vertically consolidated PBM-insurer-pharmacy arrangements from which the above-listed evils flow.

As the insurance company that married ESI, Cigna has a responsibility to bring its greed into check. If you do not, federal and state lawmakers, regulators, the press, the public, and ultimately, members will do it for Cigna.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Weinstein', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Weinstein
CEO
AIDS Healthcare Foundation