

States look at ways to ease Medicaid cuts

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At least four U.S. states have passed budget measures to increase dispensing fees for Medicaid prescriptions.

The states are concerned that some pharmacies will start turning away Medicaid patients if proposed Medicaid cuts lower the reimbursement rates pharmacists receive for generic drugs, The Wall Street Journal said Thursday.

Dispensing fees cover the portion of a pharmacist's salary and store operations used to fill a prescription, the newspaper said.

The Government Accountability Office said the Medicaid cuts would reduce reimbursements to the point that they wouldn't even cover pharmacies' costs of buying many drugs.

More than 100 members of the House of Representatives have signed a letter urging a six-month delay in implementing the new rules to give states time to come up with plans for offsetting the Medicaid cuts.

In Texas, the dispensing fee could reach as much as \$12.50, while Iowa and Kansas want to increase dispensing fees to match reimbursement cuts, the newspaper said. Louisiana passed a law that would increase dispensing fees to as high as \$15 a drug.

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