Case Study: National Union Founds Pharmacy in a Pet Shop

Problem: A union group recently took over all PBM responsibilities from one of the three large PBMs. Despite numerous complaints about a specific pharmacy by members for being "suspicious" and "unclean," the PBM stated that the pharmacy had been investigated and was in good standing in the PBM network. Once the union took over management, PIC was asked to run a COPs analysis of the network.

Solution: The COPs system identified numerous suspicious clusters of one-on-one or a majority of claims that were one-on-one relationships of pharmacies and physicians which had been passed over for fraud, waste and abuse (FWA) investigations by the PBM. One pharmacy, which appeared to be highly utilized by members (and for that reason was not eliminated by the PBM from participation in the network), stood out as a suspicious cluster, but again, may have even been passed over by COPs, had it not been for the additional information supplied by Internet sources.

The Findings: In addition to a pharmacy being registered at the address in question, a pet shop was also registered *at the same location.* Unfortunately, it is not illegal in New Jersey to operate a pet shop and a pharmacy simultaneously in the same location. However, clients should be made aware that medication exposed to airborne diseases carried by snakes, birds and reptiles in the pharmacy/pet shop exposed patients to these diseases. In addition to the pet shop situation, Internet sources discovered that:

- The owner of the pharmacy has been disbarred as a pharmacist for controlled drug abuse.
- The pharmacist in charge, reported to the state of New Jersey as the person who should have been in the pharmacy and supervising staff, was not actually working in the pharmacy on a daily basis (Facebook photos when the pharmacist should have been at work).
- There were numerous "likes" on social media for the pharmacy "friendly" behavior.

As a result, the pharmacy no longer is part of the union managed network.