

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, September 24, 2009

Contact: Dan O'Sullivan, 202-721-6078
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CVS REFUSED TO DELIVER MEDICINE TO AIDS NON-PROFIT WITHOUT IMMEDIATE PAYMENT DURING BUDGET CRUNCH

Calcutta House Severs Ties with Pharmacy Chain

Philadelphia – Leaders of the non-profit AIDS organization Calcutta House announced today that the organization is severing its long-standing ties with CVS Pharmacy. The announcement comes after CVS suspended prescription service to some of Philadelphia's most vulnerable patients last week amidst the Pennsylvania state budget crisis.

When Calcutta House, which serves AIDS patients who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, asked its vendors for compassion during a difficult financial time, all of them were happy to help—except for CVS. When the small organization ordered its regular supply of prescription drugs from CVS, the pharmacy chain showed no sympathy and refused to fill the order without immediate payment.

“Calcutta House has worked with CVS/Pharmacare for years, and our residents depend on these prescriptions,” said Calcutta House Executive Director Matthew Teter. “The company's recent actions reveal that it cares more about its bottom line than the health of the patients it claims to serve. That's not the kind of company we want to give our business to.”

Calcutta House normally orders between 15,000 and 18,000 dosages of medicine each month. The outstanding balance on its account when CVS refused to fill the prescription order was \$217.

Putting Profits Ahead of Patients

CVS has a pattern of putting profits ahead of patients, and its treatment of Calcutta House is only the latest example.

The pharmacy chain has been found to lock condom cases disproportionately in stores in low-income communities and communities of color. This practice is particularly troubling given that HIV/AIDS is the number one killer of black American women between the ages of 25 and 34, and that the rate of new HIV infections among Latinos is three times the rate of whites. The HIV/AIDS infection rate in Philadelphia is 50% higher than New York City and five times the national average.

CVS has also been caught selling a range expired products in its stores in Philadelphia, including infant formula, medicine, milk and eggs. The Philadelphia City Council and

Mayor Michael Nutter recently passed into law a bill banning expired products such as these from being sold in the city. CVS's continuing sale of expired goods was a prominent factor in the Council's decision to take action on the issue.

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Cure CVS is an initiative by Change to Win and partner organizations to reform the drugstore industry, starting with CVS, the country's leading provider of prescription drugs and largest drugstore chain. By joining concerned citizen groups with the six million members of Change to Win unions, Cure CVS aims to ensure that CVS provides equal access across all communities and income levels to its stores and services, offers fair and accurate prices, provides quality products and services, protects customers' privacy and puts quality pharmacy care first.

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