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**NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**AG Schimel Joins 37 States, Territories in Urging Health Insurers to  
Review Opioid Incentives**

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel joined a coalition of 37 states and territories urging health insurance companies to examine financial incentives that contribute to the opioid epidemic in Wisconsin.

“We have witnessed firsthand the devastation that the opioid epidemic has wrought on our states in terms of lives lost and the costs it has imposed on our healthcare system and the broader economy,” Attorney General Schimel joined the coalition in writing. “As the chief legal officers of our states, we are committed to using all tools at our disposal to combat this epidemic and to protect patients suffering from chronic pain or addiction.”

In a letter addressed to industry trade groups and major insurance providers, the attorneys general urge insurers to review their coverage and payment policies that create opioid-prescribing incentive structures across the insurance industry. Partnering with insurance providers to identify problematic policies and encouraging reforms would spur increased use of non-opioid alternatives for treatment of chronic, non-cancer pain.

In acknowledging the important role insurance companies play in reducing opioid prescriptions, the attorneys general hope to assess the positive and negative impacts incentive structures have on the opioid epidemic. The attorneys general contend incentives that promote use of non-opioid techniques will increase the practicality of medical providers considering such treatments, including physical therapy, acupuncture, massage, chiropractic care and non-opioid medications.

Increased reliance on non-opioid alternatives will combat a significant factor contributing to the epidemic – the over-prescription of opioid painkillers. The letter notes the number of opioid prescriptions have quadrupled since 1999, despite Americans reporting a steady amount of pain.

Other attorneys general signing the letter are Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

A copy of the letter is attached.