



21 March 2017

**Re: Alaska Medicaid Pharmacy Opioid Management Strategies and Initiatives – 2017**

Dear Alaska Medicaid Enrolled Pharmacists and Prescribers:

The Alaska Medicaid Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Committee, 7 AAC 120.120, has been taking an active role in addressing opioid utilization concerns in the State of Alaska. Several opioid management strategies and initiatives were initially presented at the Committee's November 2016 meeting and further refined at their January 2017 meeting. These initiatives aim to address both primary/secondary prevention efforts as well as access to medication assisted opioid-dependence treatment. The Committee has worked to align efforts with federal and state guidelines and task force recommendations utilizing evidence based strategies.

Effective April 20, 2017:

- All Medicaid pharmacy opioid prescriptions will require an ICD-10 diagnosis code to be submitted on the claim.
- Medicaid pharmacy claims for buprenorphine-based products used for Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) of opioid dependence will not require prior authorization for the first 28 day fill. Preferred Drug List rules will still apply. Single ingredient buprenorphine-based products for MAT will not be authorized for males.

The Preferred Drug List for opioid dependence treatments filled by pharmacies may be found at:

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dhcs/Pages/pharmacy/medpriorauthoriz.aspx>

Additional strategies on the horizon, with approximate deployment dates, include:

- **May 2017;** Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) education initiatives
- **June/July 2017;** Initial opioid prescription limit 7 days for opioid naïve individuals; dental procedure pain management protocols; pediatric fill limits
- **July 2017;** Phase 1, Morphine Milligram Equivalent (MME) limits
- **September 2017;** MAT Gold Star Prescriber status
- **January 2018;** Phase 2, MME limits

More information on these upcoming strategies and initiatives will be forthcoming. We encourage you to continue to watch for upcoming communication bulletins around this topic.

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Current program rules

Alaska Medicaid will continue to maintain current utilization controls on opioids through upper quantity limit and therapeutic duplication edits (established in 2011 and 2012, respectively) as well as product-specific prior authorizations. These utilization controls were put in place as a protection for patients. Prescribers are advised that circumventing these guidelines and program rules may place a patient at an increased risk of adverse outcomes.

The Medicaid Pharmacy Program expanded access to naloxone in the summer of 2016 through the removal of prior authorization requirements while setting in place a safety net to identify individuals at increased risk for overdose.

Information on these current program rules can be found at the public program links below:

[http://manuals.medicaidalaska.com/docs/dnld/Flyer\\_07222011\\_Opioid\\_Quantity\\_Limits\\_Effective\\_August\\_22\\_2011.pdf](http://manuals.medicaidalaska.com/docs/dnld/Flyer_07222011_Opioid_Quantity_Limits_Effective_August_22_2011.pdf)

[http://manuals.medicaidalaska.com/docs/dnld/AKRx\\_letter\\_Opioid\\_Therapeutic\\_Duplication\\_Edits\\_02102012.pdf](http://manuals.medicaidalaska.com/docs/dnld/AKRx_letter_Opioid_Therapeutic_Duplication_Edits_02102012.pdf)

[http://manuals.medicaidalaska.com/docs/dnld/Rx\\_Alaska\\_Medicaid\\_Pharmacy\\_Naloxone.pdf](http://manuals.medicaidalaska.com/docs/dnld/Rx_Alaska_Medicaid_Pharmacy_Naloxone.pdf)

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dhcs/Pages/pharmacy/medpriorauthoriz.aspx>

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The Alaska Medicaid Pharmacy Program encourages prescribers and pharmacists to partner with us in our endeavors to continue to address opioid utilization concerns in Alaska. The next Drug Utilization Review Committee meeting will be held on Friday, April 21, 2017 at 1pm. Information is available at:

<https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Notices/View.aspx?id=185087>.

If you have any questions or would like to share additional thoughts, please reach out to me at [erin.narus@alaska.gov](mailto:erin.narus@alaska.gov).

Sincerely,



Erin Narus, PharmD, RPh

Lead Pharmacist, Pharmacy & Ancillary Services Unit

cc: Alaska Medicaid DUR Committee Members, Margaret Brodie, Jon Sherwood, Dr. Jay Butler MD, Randall Burns