

## New opioid requirements mandate

**Background:** Effective October 1, 2019, the Department of Community Health (DCH) has implemented several measures to further combat the opioid crisis, in part by potentially reducing opioid abuse and misuse in the Georgia Medicaid population. Pursuant to Section 1902 of the *Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act*, DCH is required to implement drug utilization review (DUR) measures and safety edits to ensure compliance with this rule. Refer to <https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/hr6/BILLS-115hr6enr.pdf>.

As a result, Amerigroup Community Care is impacted by this requirement.

### What does this mean to me?

To satisfy the DCH requirement, Amerigroup has implemented the following **new** DUR measure and safety edit:

- A retrospective DUR program that will identify members with concurrently prescribed opioids **AND** antipsychotics who may be at increased risk of respiratory and CNS depression. When prescribed, messaging will occur at the point of sale (i.e., retail pharmacy) indicating Antipsych+Opioid Hx – Monitor use.
- For treatment-naïve members with noncancer pain, the maximum daily dose limit for cumulative short-acting and long-acting opioids has been reduced from 90 mg to 50 mg of morphine milligram equivalents (MME).

### What should I do when prescribing opioids for my patients?

These new requirements are in addition to our current opioid management efforts. When prescribing for treatment-naïve members, we encourage you to:

- Limit the initial prescriptions for short-acting opioids to a 7-day supply or up to a 14-day supply in 30 days. Requests for a longer duration of therapy will require a prior authorization (PA).
- Prescribe a short-acting opioid before considering a long-acting opioid. A PA is required for all long-acting opioids.
- Limit the maximum daily dose of MME to 50 mg/day. Doses above 50 MME will require a PA.
- Use caution when prescribing opioids and antipsychotics concurrently (for both treatment naïve and experienced members).

For treatment-experienced members, the maximum daily dose of MME continues to be 90 mg/day. Doses above 90 MME still require a PA. Quantity limits also apply to short-acting and long-acting opioids for both treatment naïve and experienced members. Any requests for an increased quantity will require a PA.

These new requirements align with the recommendations from the 2016 CDC guideline for primary care practitioners on prescribing opioids in outpatient settings for chronic pain (<https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html>).

### What if I need assistance?

If you have questions about this communication or need assistance with any other item, contact your local Provider Relations representative or call Provider Services at 1-800-454-3730.