



Department of Health and Human Services
 MaineCare Services
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To: MaineCare Pharmacy Providers
From: Jennifer Palow, Operations Director
Date: January 16, 2012
Re: Opiate Limits-Reminder

The following is a reminder of MaineCare’s new Opiate limits and answers to questions that have come up through the calls to the pharmacy help desk. Effective 1/01/2013, MaineCare implemented a 15 day limit for members prescribed opiates for their treatment of pain. These changes are part of the Department of Health and Human Services’ Supplemental Budgets and Administrative Savings Initiatives that were signed by Governor LePage. See Public Law 2011, c. 477 and c. 657.

As of January 1st of 2013, MaineCare members are allowed over a rolling 12 month period up to a 15 day supply of an opiate without prior authorization. Members requiring longer than 15 days will require a PA for continuation of therapy and providers may provide medical necessity. Members with acute pain may be eligible for up to three prior authorizations of up to 14 day supplies of opiates during the 12 month period. Prior authorization is not required for preferred medications for members in a nursing facility, hospice care and members receiving opioids for symptoms of cancer or HIV/AIDS. Providers will be required to indicate on the prescription these exceptions and the pharmacies will utilize the CA or HO diagnosis code when transmitting the claims for members with Cancer or in Hospice.

Prior authorization will not be required for members with 30mg or less of morphine sulfate equivalency (MSE) per day. The following is a chart of common examples of medications and the quantities of units per day below the 30mg of MSE limit. These equivalences are provided only as an approximate guide, for a full list please refer to www.mainecarepdl.org for a complete MSE conversion table.

DRUG	MSE conversion factor	tablet/day = 30mg MS
Codeine Sulfate 30mg	0.15	6
Oxycodone IR 20mg	1.5	1
Oxycodone CR 40mg	1.5	0.5
Endocet 5/325mg	1.5	4
Hydrocodone 5/500mg	1.0	6

Members that require additional opiates after the initial 8 week limits listed above will be considered chronic users and will require PA’s requiring other potential treatment options or monitoring programs. Please review the Narcotic Limit PA form and other MSE and PDL criteria on the MaineCare PDL at www.mainecarepdl.org

If you have any questions, please contact GHS at 1-888-420-9711.