



75 Vanderbilt Ave Staten Island NY 10304  1-844-CPHL-CARES  [www.centersplan.com](http://www.centersplan.com)

December 31, 2019

Re: New Medicare Part D Opioid Overutilization Policies for 2020

Dear Provider:

Centers Plan for Healthy Living (CPHL), in partnership with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), works to ensure the care of our members is effective, efficient and safe. Due to the epidemic of opioid use that has impacted our communities, CMS has multiple policies in place for Medicare drug plans to follow. These policies are designed to prevent new cases of opioid overutilization, and identify members who have already become dependent on, or addicted to, opioids. Based on the new policies, CPHL has developed four safety edits that are currently in place, and will continue in 2020. These edits will alert pharmacists at point-of-sale (POS) to prevent unsafe utilization of drugs:

- **Opioid Cumulative Dosing at POS:** There is a safety edit in place that will trigger when a member's cumulative Morphine Milligram Equivalent (MME)/day for opioid medications increases 90 MME, when there are at least two prescribers. This edit is a soft edit and can be overridden at POS or by a prior authorization requested by the provider. When a member's cumulative MME increases about 200 MME with at least two prescribers, a hard safety edit triggers. This can only be overridden by a prior authorization submitted by the provider. The goal of this edit is to reduce the risk of opioid overdose.
- **Seven-day supply limit for opioid naïve patients:** There is a hard safety edit to limit initial dispensing of opioid medications to a supply of seven days or less, with a lookback of sixty days. This can only be overridden by a prior authorization requested by the provider. The goal of this edit is to reduce the potential for chronic opioid misuse by requiring closer management of opioid naïve patients.
- **Duplicative Long-Acting Opioid at POS:** There is a soft safety edit to prevent a member from receiving multiple long-acting opioids. This edit can be overridden at POS by the pharmacist or by a prior authorization requested by the provider. The goal of this edit is to reduce the risk of opioid overdose.
- **Opioid-Benzodiazepine Concurrent Use at POS:** There is a soft safety edit to prevent members from receiving benzodiazepines and opioids concurrently. The claim will be denied if the member is taking opioids and has a new claim for benzodiazepines, and vice versa. This edit can be overridden at POS by the pharmacist or by a prior authorization requested by the provider. The goal of this edit is to reduce the risk of Central Nervous System (CNS) depression associated with opioid and benzodiazepine use.



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**Please note:** Members with sickle cell disease (new in 2020), cancer, in hospice or a long-term care facility may be exempt from the safety edit programs.

When pharmacists at point-of-sale receive notification of a safety edit rejection, they may reach out to the provider's office to verify the necessity of the opioid or benzodiazepine medication. Please ensure your staff is aware of the possibility of calls, and prepared to respond appropriately.

We appreciate your collaboration in caring for the health of your patient by prescribing opioids safely. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions concerning this communication.

Sincerely,

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