



2019 Changes to Medicare Opioid Medication Coverage

Frequently Asked Questions

The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) is making changes to the coverage of opioid medications. CMS has identified that prescriptions for acute event treatments are often in excess and can lead to a source of misuse and diversion. To combat this risk, CMS is requiring all Medicare Advantage health plans to implement certain limits on new prescriptions for opioids. These changes will take effect January 1, 2019.

Why the change?

CMS and PacificSource Medicare are teaming up to offer ways for members to reduce wasted pain medication, decrease costs, and address the risk of opioid misuse.

What are opioids?

Opioids are highly addictive pain medications such as morphine, hydrocodone, and oxycodone.

Who will this impact?

Medicare members who receive a new prescription for an opioid will be limited to an initial 7-day supply.

What are the safety alerts at the pharmacy from Medicare Health plans?

PacificSource cares about your health. When electronic claims for certain high risk medication such as high doses of opioids are submitted, PacificSource will send a safety alert to your pharmacy to make sure the medication will not harm you. Some of these safety alerts will require your pharmacist or PacificSource to review your prescription with your doctor to make sure the medication is safe. If your prescription cannot be filled as written, including the full amount on the prescription, you or your doctor can contact PacificSource for a coverage determination.

How will this reduce waste, cost, and misuse?

- By limiting new opioid prescriptions to a 7-day initial supply, you won't be left with unused opioids and you only pay for what you need.

- By not having extra medication lying around, you are helping fight opioid misuse, which can happen even in your own home with children, grandchildren, friends, or yourself.

What if I need more than a 7-day supply?

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has noted that most acute injuries require less than 3 days of opioids for pain and only in rare cases require more than 7 days of opioids.
- If you are still in pain after 7 days, your provider can write a new prescription for as many days as your benefits allow.

What do I need to do?

If you have a scheduled procedure or surgery after January 1, 2019, please discuss these changes with your doctor in case they affect your care.

Have questions or need help?

Rest assured that PacificSource is committed to helping you get the healthcare coverage you need. If you are impacted by any of these changes, we will work with you or your doctor to discuss any needed steps.

For each month that you fill a prescription, PacificSource will mail you an "Explanation of Benefits" (EOB) notice. Review your notice and check it for mistakes. Contact us if you have questions or find mistakes.

You can call us at (800) 863-3637 (TTY: 711), and we'll be happy to answer questions.

We are open:

- Oct. 1 to March 31: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. local time zone, seven days a week
- April 1 to Sept. 30: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. local time zone, Monday – Friday

PacificSource Community Health Plans is an HMO/PPO plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in PacificSource Medicare depends on contract renewal.

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al (888) 863-3637, TTY: (800) 735-2900

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 (866) 255-1408, TTY: (800) 735-2900.