



HOT TOPIC

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EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2019: SHORT- AND LONG-ACTING OPIOID MANAGEMENT MEASURES BEING IMPLEMENTED

APPLIES TO HEALTH CARE REFORM MEMBERS: New Starts Only

One of Highmark's main priorities is to ensure the safe, effective use of prescription drugs by our members, your patients. This is especially true of opioids prescribed for pain management.

Therefore, beginning April 1, 2019, Highmark will implement opioid management measures designed to assist in ensuring clinically appropriate use of opioids that will proactively reduce the risks of opioid misuse. These measures will apply to Healthcare Reform members who are new starts to therapy. These same measures have been effective for Commercial members since March 2018.

Both measures listed below follow CDC and Highmark guidelines.

Opioid Measures Being Implemented:

- **Short-acting opioids:** Initial prescriptions will be limited to seven days for patients new to therapy. Prior Authorization requirements apply. These patients will receive a maximum 14-day supply for short-acting opioids within a 30-day period without additional authorization. There will be exceptions for members with cancer or other terminal illnesses. (Quantity level limits are based on CDC Guidelines.)
- **Long-acting opioids:** Prior authorization for new users will be required to initiate therapy. Prior authorization will require confirmation of diagnosis. (Quantity level limits for long-acting opioids have existed for many years, with exceptions for those who have terminal or chronic illnesses.)

Additional Helpful Resources

Pharmacy policy J-832 was created to support these measures. To view this policy, visit Highmark's Provider Resource Center, and select **Pharmacy Policy Search** from the top navigation bar.

For further assistance, the following resources may aid in appropriate prescribing of prescription opioids:

- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/clinical-tools.html>
- JAMA: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2503508>

We appreciate your support of our members, your patients, in the safe, effective use of prescription medications.

Note: For your convenience, NaviNet® can be used for any pharmacy authorization requests. It not only saves time, but it can also notify you if a duplicate request has already been received by Highmark and ensures that the patient is a Highmark member with active pharmacy benefits.