

## MCG message

Title: **New opioid medication prescribing limits edit**

Posting date: **May 13, 2021**

**Summary:** Blue Cross Complete announces an update to the cumulative monthly morphine milligram equivalents, or MME, edit for prescribed opioid medications as of July 1, 2021.

### Impact

Opioid utilization and overutilization continue to be a focus in healthcare. Although opioid utilization in general has continued to decrease, safe opioid prescribing practices continue to be a focus. In addition, continuous improvement in the way opioids are prescribed enhances safety and ensures more effective chronic pain treatment<sup>1</sup>. More importantly, it ensures patient safety and improved outcomes.

Current guidelines and updates are available from the Centers for Disease Control and the Michigan Quality Improvement Consortium.

- CDC – <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html>\*
- MQIC – <http://www.mqic.org/guidelines.htm>

Blue Cross Complete implemented a cumulative edit to enhance safety and to identify members who may need additional outreach from our case management team. This edit was originally set at 120 mg per day and is in addition to other edits such as age limits, quantity limits, and the seven-day acute opioid limit, which are applied under the plan's pharmacy benefit. The upcoming change will set the MME limit at 90 mg per day. This change aligns us with the fee for service cumulative MME edit transition, which will also take place as of July 1, 2021. Patients and providers are encouraged to work together to address any additional prior authorization needs when a member's treatment requires an MME > 90 mg per day.

This edit isn't meant to supersede clinical practice guidelines or the treatment plan for your individual patients. This is intended to address safety and prevent unintentional consequences of elevated and long term opioid utilization.

### Action

Starting on July 1, 2021, the plan will require prior authorization for opioid prescriptions with an individual or cumulative MME > 90 mg per day. The change details are shown in the chart below. These changes don't impact the current formulary structure and edits established for opioids that



are covered on the Common Formulary. Members who are identified as having a cumulative MME > 90 mg per day, and don't currently have an authorization in place for this edit, will require a prior authorization in order to continue their current medication(s). We will be unable to process prior authorizations for the new limit until July 1, 2021.

Additional resources are available through the references below. An MME conversion factor reference table for commonly prescribed opioids, along with an overview of conversion calculations, is provided on the third reference link below.

MME/day limit update as of July 1, 2021		
Impact	Dosing limit	Day supply limit
Members who require opioid doses which exceed the established MME dosing limit.**	No more than 90 MME/day	A single prescription or combination of prescriptions which exceed a cumulative MME dose of > 90 mg per day will require prior authorization.

\*\*Members established on opioids at an MME greater than the current limit may already have an active authorization on file. Current authorizations will continue to be honored until the established expiration date provided on the approval.

### Questions

If you have any questions, please contact your Blue Cross Complete provider account executive, Provider Inquiry at 1-888-312-5713 or PerformRx Pharmacy Services at 1-888-989-0057.

### References

1. Opioid prescribing guideline resources – CDC website. Retrieved April 14, 2021 from <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/resources.html>.
2. Clinical tools for primary care providers – CDC website. Retrieved April 14, 2021 from <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/clinical-tools.html>.
3. About CDC's opioid prescribing guideline – CDC website. Retrieved April 14, 2021 from <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html>.

\*Our website is [mibluccrosscomplete.com](http://mibluccrosscomplete.com). While website addresses for other organizations are provided for reference, Blue Cross Complete does not control these sites and is not responsible for their content.

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