

To: Blue Cross Complete of Michigan Providers
Date: October 30, 2019
Subject: **New opioid medication prescribing limits edit**

Summary: Blue Cross Complete of Michigan announces an update to the cumulative monthly morphine mg equivalents, or MME, edit for prescribed opioid medications as of December 1, 2019.

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 treatment¹. 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 of Michigan implemented an accumulation edit to enhance safety and to identify members who may need additional outreach from our case management team. This edit was originally set at 200 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 150 mg per day. This change allows us to align with the current fee for service cumulative MME edit. Patients and providers are encouraged to work together to address any additional prior authorization needs when a member's treatment requires an MME > 150 mg per day.

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

Action

Starting on December 1, 2019, the plan will require prior authorization for opioid prescriptions with an individual or cumulative MME > 150 mg per day. The change details are reflected 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 > 150 mg per day,



and don't currently have an authorization in place for this edit, will be grandfathered until April 1, 2020. This will help to minimize potential disruption and will allow for additional outreach and engagement activities.

New prescriptions / New starts			
Stage	Date the change starts	Dosing limit	Day supply limit
New Starts	December 1, 2019	No more than 150 MME*	A single prescriptions or combination of prescriptions which exceed a cumulative MME dose of ≥ 150 mg per day will require prior authorization.

Dosing limits for members currently prescribed Opioids			
Stage	Date the change starts	Dosing limit	Details
1	December 1, 2019	No more than 150MME*	Grandfather period begins
2	April 1, 2020	No more than 150MME*	Grandfathering period ends. A single prescription or combination of prescriptions which exceed a cumulative MME dose of ≥ 150 mg per day will require prior authorization.

*MME – morphine mg equivalents

**Edit is already in place and is not changing.

References:

1. CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain. (8/28/2019). Retrieved October 7, 2019 from <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html>.