

ADDOPTION OF CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC) GUIDELINES WHEN OPIOIDS ARE PRESCRIBED FOR CHRONIC PAIN

HELPING TO KEEP OUR EMPLOYEES SAFE!

In response to the Surgeon General's call for employers to help fight the opioid epidemic, and to keep employees and their insured family members safe, CDC guidelines will be followed when opioids are prescribed for pain control.

Some important things to know about prescription opioids:

- Opioid prescriptions at any dose carry potential risks.
- Opioid therapy may not improve pain or function, and many of the benefits decrease after prolonged use.
- It is estimated that 75% of patients who take prescription opioids for chronic pain continue to take opioids because it is too difficult to stop – NOT to control pain.
- 115 Americans die every day from opioid overdose.
- 80% of heroin users started with prescriptions opioids.

Some ways “CDC guidelines for opioid prescribing” will help keep you and your family safe

- Network providers will be educated on Best Practice guidelines when opioids are prescribed. These guidelines stress that opioids should be used only when necessary, and when they are used, a low dose should be used for a short time period.
- Non-opioid, and non-drug therapies will now be first line therapy for chronic pain.
- Opioid agreements (between patient and doctor) will be used when opioids are used for chronic pain. This agreement lists some of the risks and benefits of opioid therapy. The agreement also lists some reasonable goals of opioid therapy, and some circumstances that may cause opioid therapy to be tapered or discontinued.
- When opioids are prescribed, your physician may ask you to do a urine drug screen. Drug screens can help your doctor be sure that the dose you are taking is safe and effective. Drug screens can also identify other drugs that may be dangerous to take while someone is taking an opioid prescription.
- If it is determined that prescription opioids are the safest and most effective treatment for chronic pain, plan members may be referred to a pain management specialist. Pain management specialists are doctors with special training in treating people with chronic pain

How you can help

If your doctor does not appear to be following CDC guidelines when prescribing opioids, such as not using a pain management agreement or not using drug screens when opioids are prescribed for chronic pain, please contact our Risk Management Team. They will contact your physician and provide educational materials about Best Practice.

Risk Management Team – 855-209-5646