



## GATEWAY HEALTH:

### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING OPIOID PRESCRIPTION PRIOR-AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS (Effective September 15, 2017)

Beginning **September 15, 2017**, Gateway PA Medicaid will launch a phased implementation of formulary changes affecting opioid analgesics in alignment with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' statewide opioid initiative. These changes include prior authorization requirements for opioid prescriptions exceeding the below limits. The prior authorization limits will apply to ***NEW*** starts only beginning 9/15/17. New starts will be identified as any member who has not had a claim for any opioid medication in the last 90 days. There will be additional notifications as this initiative expands to include existing prescriptions with the goal of including all PA Medicaid by 12/31/17. Although all opioid prescribing should be closely monitored, the changes listed below will ***NOT*** apply to Gateway Medicare Assured members.

#### **PRIOR-AUTHORIZATION LIMITS:**

- Scripts for children (<21) with a duration of therapy longer than 7 days in a 30 day period
- Scripts for adults (≥21) with a duration of therapy longer than 14 days in a 30 day period
- Cumulative opioid doses > 90 milligram morphine equivalents (MME)/day

We know that providing adequate pain control while mitigating potential risks can be challenging. In an effort to support you in providing the highest quality care and to minimize unintentional overdose risk and other safety concerns associated with opioid use, we have included resources to assist with MME calculation, tapering plans, using the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), naloxone, and substance use disorder referral to treatment on our website at: <http://www.gatewayhealthplan.com/OpioidInformation>. In addition included with this communication is valuable background information on Gateway's intervention strategy.

We appreciate your help and collaboration in encouraging the safe and appropriate use of opioid medications. If you have any questions, please contact Gateway Health at 1-800-392-1147.



## Gateway Health Opioid Intervention Strategy

Gateway Health is committed to working with providers to ensure safe, quality healthcare for our members. As you are aware, prescription medications are an important part of improving the quality of life for millions of Americans living with acute or chronic pain. However, one of the most serious public health problems in our country is the over dependence on these substances, particularly prescription opioid pain medications. Pennsylvania is among the top 10 states with the highest opioid use and overdose rates nationally.

In response to the opioid epidemic across Pennsylvania, Gateway Health is executing a multi-year, multi-pronged strategy targeting a combination of the following initiatives to ensure that we are offering the right members the right interventions according to their individual needs:

- Robust communication to members, pharmacies and providers impacted by these changes
- Prevention of dependence and addiction by early intervention when members have high risk pharmacy utilization
- Avoidance of concomitant use of benzodiazepines and high-dose opioids
- Support for members and their physicians in weaning off high-dose opioids
- Assuring access to naloxone
- Education of staff on differences between addiction and dependence in order to reinforce appropriate support for members and minimize stigma for those struggling with addiction
- Working with providers to establish clinics for addicted pregnant women,
- Supporting opioid treatment Centers of Excellence
- Collaborating with providers to develop Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome treatment protocols and staff education,
- Aggressively utilizing the “lock in” program for members getting opioids from multiple providers
- Assuring a high quality Medication Assisted Treatment network that does not charge our members cash for Medicaid covered services

