

<LOGO>
120 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Feb. 15, 2018

<Prescriber_First_Name> < Prescriber_Last_Name>
<Address 1>
<Address 2>
<Prescriber_City>, <Prescriber_State> <Prescriber_ZIP_Code>

Dear <Physician Name>:

As you know the opioid epidemic is rising in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), "We now know that overdoses from prescription opioids are a driving factor in the 15-year increase in opioid overdose deaths."¹ You, our valued prescribing provider, are receiving this letter because you have been identified as a possible prescriber of opioid medications in patients requiring this as part of their treatment plan.

Like you, one of Highmark's main priorities is the safe, effective use of prescription drugs by our members, your patients. Therefore, **beginning March 8, 2018**, Highmark will implement opioid measures designed to assist in ensuring clinically appropriate use of opioids that will proactively prevent the development of opioid use disorder.

Both measures listed below follow CDC and Highmark guidelines. The measures will be effective March 8, 2018, for commercial members.

Short-acting and long-acting opioid measures:

- **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 illnesses**.)

*The Short-Acting Opioid Prior Authorization Form and
Extended Release Opioid Prior Authorization Form are enclosed for your convenience.*

Reminder: NaviNet® can be used for any authorization request. 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.

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Pharmacy policy J-672 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>

Pennsylvania's new Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PA PDMP) assists prescribing providers in identifying patients struggling with substance abuse disorder while offering access to expansive resources including:

- Opioid Prescribing Guidelines
- Talking with Patients
- Patient Education Materials
- Identifying Red Flags for Addiction and Diversion
- State Resources Available to You

Visit their website at:

<http://www.health.pa.gov/Your-Department-of-Health/Offices%20and%20Bureaus/PaPrescriptionDrugMonitoringProgram/Pages/Prescribers.aspx#>.

For BlueCard Patients (all other states): Please visit the National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws at: www.namsdl.org/prescription-monitoring-programs.cfm

We appreciate the exemplary clinical treatment and support you provide our members, your patients.

Sincerely,

Highmark Pharmacy Services

Enclosures:

1. Extended Release Opioid Prior Authorization Form
2. Short-Acting Opioid Prior Authorization Form

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¹www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html - Aug. 30, 2017