



Dear Health Care Provider:

January 4, 2017

RE: Opioid high dose limit set at 200 mg/day of total daily morphine equivalents – effective 3/1/2017

Amida Care's Chronic Opioid Program has been implemented to improve the health of our members by ensuring opioids are prescribed for appropriate indications, at safe doses, and in conjunction with other pain management treatment strategies rooted in harm reduction. The goal of this initiative is to prevent dose escalation for patients' already on high doses and to assist our providers in prescribing opioids safely and appropriately. As a Medicaid Managed Care health plan, Amida Care is subject to governmental regulations. This comprehensive and interdisciplinary initiative was also developed to enforce policies as they are mandated by the New York State Department of Health. The next phase of our program includes the implementation of Morphine Equivalent Dosing (MED) Edits at Point of Sale.

Morphine Equivalent Dosing (MED)

The effectiveness of prescribing high dose opioids (≥ 120 mg/day morphine equivalents) is not supported by strong evidence. Higher doses are associated with an increased risk for adverse events and side effects. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) established a threshold MED of 120 mg/day for high use of opioids. Meanwhile, the [2016 CDC Opioid Prescribing Guidelines](#) recommend a threshold MED of 90 mg/day. In order to minimize member disruption, Amida Care will set a MED of 200 mg/day, **effective March 1, 2017**.

MED is calculated for each member's opioid prescription claim using the appropriate conversion factor associated with the opioid product for the claim. After converting the member's opioid medications to their MED, a member's cumulative prescription opioid daily dose is calculated to determine if he/she exceeded the 200 MED threshold. A prescription will reject at Point-of-Sale that, if filled, would cause the member to exceed the cumulative daily MED threshold of 200.

Please note that prescriptions exceeding dose limits will require a Prior Authorization, which will be required to include medical records documenting a treatment plan including the rationale for high dose, treatment goals, and a signed and dated patient prescriber agreement.

Provider Education

Provider Education is available through the **New York State Medicaid Prescriber Education Program (NYSMPEP)**, a partnership between the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the State University of New York (SUNY). In person, in-office Academic Educator visits can be scheduled on the topic of *chronic non-cancer pain* in conjunction with free continuing education accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (CME).

- To schedule a visit with an NYSMPEP academic educator, contact: pep@nysdoh.suny.edu
- For additional information on the educational modules and enduring programs, please visit the NYSMPEP website: <https://nypep.nysdoh.suny.edu/>

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or call Amida Care's Pharmacy Department at **(646) 757-7979**.

Sincerely,

Elly Fatehi, PharmD, MPH, BCPS

Director of Clinical Pharmacy

efatehi@amidacareny.org