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New Mexico Health Connections and OptumRx to Launch Program to Limit Opioid Use

Misuse or abuse of high-potency prescription pain medications (opioids) is a serious public health issue. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that, since 1999, overdose deaths related to prescription opioids have quadrupled. Data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicates that 44 Americans die from prescription opioid overdose every day.

In general, opioid use should be limited to short-term pain control (although certain patients receive value from longer-term use). Patients often receive more doses of these potent pain medications than are needed to treat short-term pain.

To address this issue, New Mexico Health Connections is partnering with its pharmacy benefit manager, OptumRx®, to implement the Opioid Risk Management Program. Beginning January 1, 2018, NMHC members will be subject to this new program. The program will limit new prescriptions for members who are new to opioid therapy to only a 7-day supply, with an allowance for up to two 7-day supplies within a 60-day period. The Opioid Risk Management program also adds other restrictions on opioid use, including:

- Placing a maximum dose of opioids that members may receive.
- Requiring that 90 percent of a prescription be used prior to any refill.

For members who require extended therapy with short-acting opioids, providers may submit prior authorization requests to OptumRx for review. Please include all relevant clinical information with the prior authorization request.

For additional information about opioid use, please visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/opioids/index.html>.

There are also numerous provider resources posted on the Pharmacy page of the NMHC website, under the *Opioid Risk Management Program* heading: <http://www.mynmhc.org/Formulary.aspx>.