

A Blue Cross of Idaho white paper: *Focusing on Opioids in Idaho*

TALKING POINTS

8/30/18

1. Blue Cross of Idaho is a leader in the fight against opioid misuse, abuse and death in Idaho.
#NoLivesLost
2. Opiate misuse and abuse is a national public health emergency.
 - a. The costs of treating overdoses, abuse and dependence on prescription opioids is some \$78 billion, per the U.S. National Library of Medicine.
3. Blue Cross of Idaho is implementing a new opioid management strategy with three main objectives:
 - a. Limiting the number of days an opioid is prescribed to opioid naïve members (members who are not used to taking opioid medications).
 - b. Prescribing opioids of limited strength to opioid naïve members.
 - c. Requiring prescribers first use immediate acting opioids before prescribing extended-release versions.
4. Blue Cross of Idaho's strategy is two-fold:
 - a. Try to reduce or eliminate the number of people exposed to at-risk opioid use, without comprising care for those with legitimate medical need.
 - b. Provide safe and effective treatment to end opioid addiction for those suffering.
5. Since 2015, Blue Cross of Idaho has seen a nearly 45 percent reduction in new opioid prescription users and a 61 percent reduction in the number of prescriptions written. More closely setting access limits has led to improvements
 - a. Opiate abuse in Idaho is mild when compared to national statistics.
 - b. West Virginia ranks 52, as the state with the highest number of opioid overdose deaths.
6. Blue Cross of Idaho is making Naloxone, a life-saving drug designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose, more accessible to members by reducing copays for the generic form of the drug.
7. Blue Cross of Idaho's Behavioral Health and Case Management teams provide seamless care to those who suffer from opioid addiction and have been released from in-patient detox/rehab. After an addiction event, the Behavioral Health team builds an episode history and based on member assessment, case summary and other information, refers the patient to a case management team who contacts the member, within 48 hours.
8. Blue Cross of Idaho is hosting a drug disposal event at its Meridian headquarters, as part of the DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on October 27.

Blue Cross of Idaho's New Opioid Management Strategy

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1. Limits the number of days an opioid is prescribed for opioid naïve members.
2. Limits the strength of opioids prescribed for opioid naïve members.
3. Requires step therapy, i.e., prescribers must first use opioids that are immediate-release (fast-acting) before prescribing extended-release (long-lasting).
4. Tracks prescribing and use patterns through the Idaho State Board of Pharmacy to determine misuse and abuse of opioids.

ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT POINTS

8/30/18

- Thoroughly vetted, researched and designed to enhance the safety of our members and our community.
- Aligns with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines
- Developed with feedback from several Treasure Valley pharmacists and physicians
- Approved by the Blue Cross of Idaho Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee
- ALL utilizers (about 700 members) who exceeded these limits prior to 8/1/18 were grandfathered indefinitely at their respective doses. However, if that same member increases their dose or changes to a new opioid at an equivalent or higher dose, they will become subject to the requirements of the program.
- All Members undergoing active cancer treatment, palliative care, or end of life care, are NOT subject to this program.
- Members who have an opioid prescription written by an oncologist and/or if they have a claims history of an oncology medication within the past 12 months will not be subject to the limits of this program.
- All Idaho pharmacies and providers were sent letters on 6/1/18 and 7/1/18 informing them of these changes that were effective 8/1/18.
- Per their website, Regence has similar opioid initiatives.

Blue Cross of Idaho's New Opioid Management Strategy

ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT POINTS (continued)

8/30/18

- Members with existing opioid prescriptions may call 208-387-6924, or 800-627-6655 with questions.
- Members with existing opioid prescriptions, who have multiple prescribing physicians, will need to notify Blue Cross of Idaho within 30 days of their choice of one physician for all their opioid medications. If a Member does not choose a prescribing physician within the 30-day period, Blue Cross of Idaho will choose one for the member. All claims submitted for opioid prescriptions written by any other physician will be denied and the member will be responsible for payment.
- Members who are opioid naïve may call the phone number on the back of their ID card with questions.