



COLORADO

Department of Health Care  
Policy & Financing

# Opioid Policy Update FAQs for Members

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July 2017

## Member Frequently Asked Questions

### **Does this policy impact my prescription medication coverage?**

This policy only applies to a prescription for short-acting opioids (common opioids include hydrocodone and oxycodone) and only if you have not received an opioid prescription in the past 12 months. Your first prescription will be limited to a 7-day supply, which is often a sufficient dose for acute pain. All other opioid and non-opioid medications and medication coverage are not affected.

### **I received 7 days of an opioid medication and am still in pain. Will Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) allow more opioids to be prescribed?**

Yes, if the initial fill was not sufficient, a second and third fill are allowed for 7 days' supply each through this policy. After that, an opioid prescription will require prior approval from the Department, and possibly a consultation between your doctor and a pain management specialist to assess your long-term pain management needs.

### **I am currently taking opioids. Will this interrupt my access to my pain medication?**

No, this policy does not affect members who are currently taking opioids. Only members who have not taken opioids in the past 12 months are affected by this policy, other opioid-related policies may apply.

### **What is an opioid?**

An opioid is a powerful pain-relieving medication and like all medications, has risks with its use. Prescription opioids include codeine, hydrocodone, oxycodone, fentanyl, tramadol, and many others. Opioids have varying durations of action that may be a result of how the pharmaceutical company formulated them or inherent characteristics

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of the drug molecule. They are generally grouped into short-acting and long-acting groups because of their duration of action. Long acting opioids should only be prescribed for long-term severe pain.

### **What are the risks of taking an opioid?**

Prescription opioids are used for pain and many of them are highly addictive. Additionally, opioids have a risk of causing overdose or death. This risk is increased when opioids are taken with products that increase the effects of the medication including but not limited to alcohol, benzodiazepines (Xanax, valium, clonazepam, etc.), and/or muscle relaxing agents (carisoprodol/Soma).

### **Where can I find additional resources on opioids and information about managing my pain?**

Health First Colorado has a pain management resources page that can be found at: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/hcpf/pain-management-resources-and-opioid-use>

## **For More Information Contact**

**Medicaid Customer Contact Center  
800-221-3943**

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