OPIOID USE IN COLORADO: \textbf{Colorado Medicaid Addresses Addiction}

Opioid abuse is a serious problem in Colorado and across the nation. In 2015, 259 people died in Colorado from prescription opioid overdoses — drugs like hydrocodone and oxycodone. That compares with 205 people who died from homicide.

\section*{Opioid Epidemic: State of Colorado}

- **OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS**: Increased from 2000-2015\textsuperscript{2}
- **HEROIN OVERDOSE DEATHS**: Increased 23\% in 2016\textsuperscript{2}
- In 2015, approximately one Coloradan died every 36 hours from opioid overdose.\textsuperscript{2}

\section*{Opioid Epidemic: Colorado Medicaid}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{22.8\%} of Coloradans were Medicaid members\textsuperscript{3}
  \item \textbf{87} prescription opioid overdose deaths were Medicaid members\textsuperscript{4}
  \item \textbf{28.8\%} of total overdose deaths were Medicaid members\textsuperscript{4}
\end{itemize}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{prescriptions.png}
\caption{Opioid and Total Prescriptions\textsuperscript{5}}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
  \item During 2016, 9.0\% of Rx were opioids\textsuperscript{3}
  \item During 2013, 11.3\% of Rx were opioids\textsuperscript{5}
\end{itemize}

The effects of opioid addiction can impact Coloradans of all ages. Mothers who abuse opioids during pregnancy can give birth to drug-addicted babies who experience Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). These newborns are addicted to opioids at birth and go through withdrawal. The number of annual NAS births identified via Colorado Medicaid claims data increased from 194 births in 2012 to 371 births in 2016.
**Evolving Our Programs and Developing Solutions**

**Medicaid Member Opioid Prescriptions by County**

During 2013
710 providers prescribed high dose* opioids for 30+ days

During 2016
288 providers prescribed high dose* opioids for 30+ days

**Treating Addiction and Dependence**
We cover products to treat addiction or dependence, such as Suboxone® and buprenorphine. We also cover substance use disorder behavioral health services.

**Overdose Antidote Administration**
We cover a nasal atomizer device that can be used to administer an opioid overdose antidote (naloxone).

**Drug Utilization Review Program**
Pain consultations and recommendations for drug utilization, provider education, interventions, and best practices.

---

**Additional Opportunities to Address This Issue**

- **Leveraging Nationwide Best Practices**: 35 other states allow Medicaid programs access to their Prescription Drug Monitoring Program databases. This access would allow Colorado Medicaid to understand utilization patterns and could help identify members at risk of an opioid overdose or who could benefit from care coordination services.

- **Better Aligning with Dosing Guidelines**: We will continue to encourage tapering of opioid use down to guideline supported doses and plan to make adjustments to our utilization management strategies.

- **Providing Comparative Data to Prescribers**: Through our Drug Utilization Review Program, we will continue to communicate to prescribers about their opioid prescribing. We plan to add a comparison of prescribers where they will see how their prescribing habits compare to other similar prescribers.

---

2As prescription opioid deaths drop 6 percent in Colorado, heroin deaths rise 23 percent, Denver Post, March 7, 2017.
3According to CHI “Percent Enrollment In Medicaid” report, 22.8% of the total Colorado population was enrolled in Medicaid in 2015.
4CDPHE Health Watch No. 100 (Rosenthal et al, 2016) and CDPHE Vital Statistics Program Medicaid Death Certificate Extract, prepared by HCPF Data Analysis Section.
5Data is 4th Quarter MMIS data for each year.
6National Association For State Model Drug Laws.
7Greater than 300 morphine milliequivalent doses or >300 MED.