



COLORADO

Department of Health Care  
Policy & Financing

# Opioid Policy Change FAQs for Providers

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July 2017

## Provider Frequently Asked Questions

### **What providers does this policy apply to?**

This policy applies to all providers registered with Health First Colorado prescribing opioids to a member.

### **Does this policy apply to CHP+ members as well?**

No, this policy does not apply to CHP+ as it is a separate health plan with its own drug benefit.

### **What should I do if a member should be excluded from this policy?**

The Department understands that this policy may not apply to all members due to certain patient conditions or other factors. If a provider believes their patient should receive opioids outside of this policy, call Magellan at 800-424-5725 for a prior authorization.

### **Who does this policy affect?**

This policy affects Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) members who have not had any opioid prescription claims in the past 365 days. This definition is subject to change in the future.

### **Is there a limit on how many dosage forms (tablets, capsules) may be prescribed?**

Yes, the maximum daily quantity is 8 dosage forms per day (56 pills for a 7-day supply) for members who are opioid naïve. Health First Colorado recommends prescribing a minimally necessary number of dosage forms.

Our mission is to improve health care access and outcomes for the people we serve while demonstrating sound stewardship of financial resources.  
[www.colorado.gov/hcpf](http://www.colorado.gov/hcpf)



**When will this policy be implemented?**

The implementation date is set for August 1, 2017.

**Why is Health First Colorado implementing this policy?**

A correlation between days' supply of the initial prescription for an opioid and continued opioid use has been found in studies, including the Centers for Disease Control. One goal of this policy is to decrease the risk of Health First Colorado Members transitioning from short-term opioid use to chronic use, potentially leading to addiction. Another goal is to decrease the number of unused opioid pills in the community.

**What opioids are included?**

For members who are determined to be opioid naïve, this policy will allow a 7 days' supply of a short acting opioid to be filled (hydrocodone, Vicodin, Percocet, etc). All long-acting opioids (such as fentanyl, methadone, Oxycontin) will require a prior authorization for a member who is found to be opioid naïve.

**Does this policy impact other medications or member eligibility?**

No, this policy only impacts members who are determined to be opioid naïve and are receiving an initial prescription at a pharmacy for any opioid.

**My patient is still in pain after receiving 7 days of an opioid prescription, will Health First Colorado cover more than 7 days of opioid therapy?**

Yes, Health First Colorado will allow two additional 7-day opioid prescriptions, but further prescriptions beyond 21 days will require a prior authorization and potentially a consult with a pain management physician (provided through Health First Colorado).

**Where can I find Health First Colorado's medication use criteria?**

The Preferred Drug List and Appendix P can be found at:

<https://www.colorado.gov/hcpf/provider-forms#PDL>

**Where can I find additional resources on opioids and pain management?**

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>



**Under what circumstances would the Department require a consultation with the DUR pain management specialist?**

Complex cases will most likely require a consultation. Most cases should not require a consultation, unless specifically requested by the provider.

**Who is the Department's pain management specialist and what are his credentials?**

Dr. Alex Reish, DO  
Pain Management Specialist  
Drug Utilization Review board member

**What if there's a difference of opinion between the Department's pain management specialist and a member's doctor, how will those discrepancies be resolved?**

The pain specialist's consultation goal is to come to a mutually agreed upon conclusion. The Specialist will make recommendations to the Department about the course of treatment. Because every patient has individual medical needs, each recommendation is made on a case by case basis.

**What alternatives modes of pain treatment does Health First Colorado cover?**

Several non-opioid medications that are used for pain are covered. Please see the preferred drug list for a list of covered drugs. Outpatient physical and occupational therapy are also covered benefits with a referral from your primary care doctor or the hospital you are discharged from. [Click here](#) for coverage information.

