

ProviderAlert

To: Select Health of South Carolina Providers

From: Greg Barabell, MD, Chief Medical Officer

Date: February 1, 2018

Subject: Benefit Limitations for Opiate Prescriptions

Based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the South Carolina Board of Medical Examiners (SCBME), and in support of the Governor's Executive Order number 2017-43, First Choice by Select Health of South Carolina will apply benefit limitations to opioid prescriptions for opioid-naïve members. An opioid-naïve member is defined as a member who has not filled an opioid prescription within the past 60 calendar days.

Effective March 1, 2018, First Choice will implement benefit limitations for any opiate prescription that exceeds 90 morphine milligram equivalents (MME) per day and/or exceeds a five calendar day supply for opioid-naïve members.

Requests for opiate prescriptions that exceed these limitations will require prior authorization (PA). Approval of a PA request for an opiate exceeding these limitations will be based on documentation that supports and justifies medical necessity.

Hematologists/oncologists and hospice providers will be exempt from these opioid limitations. First Choice will identify these specialists. Providers can check their opioid exemption status by contacting their account executive. Account executive contact information is available on the Select Health website at [Provider Account Executives map](#) or by calling 1-843-569-4598.

As a reminder, according to South Carolina state law, Section 44-53-1645, a provider must review the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) portal (SCRIPTS), before a drug with a Drug Enforcement Agency schedule II - IV is prescribed.

This is the first step in a phased implementation by First Choice to ensure best practices are followed for the prescribing of all opioid prescriptions. In the future, day supply, MME limitations, and PA requirements will be enforced for **all** members prescribed an opioid prescription, not just opioid-naïve members. We will provide written notice in advance of future changes.

For additional information and tools on opiate prescribing, please visit:

- CDC: http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/guidelines_factsheet-a.pdf
- MME Calculator:
<http://www.agencymeddirectors.wa.gov/calculator/dosecalculator.htm>
- SCDHEC SCRIPTS Portal: <https://southcarolina.pmpaware.net/login>

If you have any questions, please call PerformRx Pharmacy Services at **1-866-610-2773**.

Please note: This opioid implementation does not apply to First Choice VIP Care Plus members.

Thank you for the care you provide to our members, your patients.