



**To:** AmeriHealth Caritas DC Providers  
**Date:** October 30, 2017  
**Subject:** **New Opioid Medication Prescribing Limits**  
**(Updated letter, supersedes letter dated 10-19-2017; changes are highlighted below in italics)**

**Summary:** AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia (DC) announces upcoming limits to prescribed opioid medications to address the ongoing epidemic of drug abuse and deaths from overdoses.

### **Impact**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports overdoses from prescription opioids are a driving factor in the 15-year increase in opioid overdose deaths. Since 1999, the number of prescription opioids sold in the United States has nearly quadrupled, yet there has not been an overall change in the amount of pain that Americans report. Death rates from prescription opioids — drugs like oxycodone, hydrocodone, and methadone — have more than quadrupled since 1999. Additional information can be found at [www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html).

To address this crisis, AmeriHealth Caritas DC is implementing changes that will limit the quantity and days' supply covered under the plan's pharmacy benefit. The upcoming prescription limits will be implemented in stages, and, to ensure reasonable and timely adherence to these changes, patients and providers are encouraged to work together.

***We will be basing these changes on both the cumulative monthly morphine mg equivalents (MME) and the days' supply being requested.***

### **Action**

***Starting on November 13, 2017 the plan will not pay for prescriptions greater than 90MME and/or 7 days' supply for any new starts.*** Subsequent changes will occur on December 4, 2017, January 1, 2018 and January 29, 2018 affecting members who are **currently** on opioids, as reflected in the chart below. These changes will limit the plan-covered maximum days' supply and the maximum daily dose.



New Prescriptions / New Starts			
Stage	Date the change starts	Dosing limit	Day supply limit
New Starts	November 13, 2017	No more than 90MME*	No more than a 7 day supply

Dosing Limits for Members Currently Prescribed Opioids			
Stage	Date the change starts	Dosing limit	Day supply limit
1	December 4, 2017	No more than 150MME*	No more than a 14 day supply
2	January 1, 2018	No more than 120MME*	No more than a 7 day supply
3	January 29, 2018	No more than 90MME*	No more than a 7 day supply

***\*MME – morphine mg equivalents***

**Questions**

If you have any questions about this communication, please contact Tracey Davis, PharmD, Director of Pharmacy at 202-349-3578.