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Opioid-containing medicine | Discovery Health rules for safe access

Rationale

Discovery Health is committed to supporting responsible prescribing and dispensing practices. Published studies have illustrated the addictive potential of opioid-containing medicine and the negative health impact of excessive opioid use.

To address these concerns, Discovery Health has implemented quantity limitations as well as a restriction on the number of prescription refills allowed for opioid-containing medicine.

Aligned with global guidance on safe and responsible access to opioid-containing medication, Discovery Health has amended the way that we pay for these medicines.

Limitations for opioid-containing medicines

- Access is limited to a 30-day supply over a 90-day period, or 90 days' cumulative supply over a calendar year.
- Exceptions to the access rules will be considered if the prescribing doctor submits a clinical motivation.
- Members using more than the allowed quantity will need to fund this as an out-of-pocket expense.

Opioid-containing medicine	Rule at the recommended dose
Prescription pain medicine, like Stilpane, Synaleve, Targinact	30 cumulative days of supply over a 90-day period, based on mild to moderate symptoms OR 90 cumulative days of supply in a calendar year Severe cases will be reviewed.
Over-the-counter pain medicine, like Adco-dol, Syndol, Acurate	
Over-the-counter cough mixtures, like Broncleer, Benelyn with codeine	

The exceptions process

If claims are being rejected, pharmacists and members can apply for exceptions.

- Pharmacists: Log a DHPBM inquiry to have the override applied. Call 0860 776 726 or send an email to ProPBM_QUERIES@discovery.co.za (24-hour resolution).
- Members: They must consult with their treating providers to get a script and motivation.

It is our sincere hope that these measures will be recognised as a proactive initiative to enhance and protect our members' health.

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