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Inland Empire Health Plan

PHARMACY TIMES

BY IEHP PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

February 2, 2022

New DHCS DUR Board Educational Article

IEHP reviews the DHCS DUR Board Educational Articles regularly for important information we can pass on to our Provider Network. From the DUR Board Website: *The purpose of this educational intervention component of DUR is to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of prescribing and dispensing practices for Medi-Cal recipients. Educational interventions include ongoing dissemination of information through the Medi-Cal provider bulletin process about clinically important, drug-specific therapy problems.*

Disclaimer: These articles are the result of analyses carried out by the Global Medi-Cal DUR Program and are not official policies of the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

The newest article, entitled Improving the Quality of Care: Legislative Impact on the use of Naloxone was published December 31, 2021. To reduce paper usage, the article may be accessed online here: <https://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/dur/edarticles.aspx>.

December 31, 2021



Improving the Quality of Care: Legislative Impact on the Use of Naloxone

Learning Objectives:

- Identify risk factors for opioid-induced respiratory depression
- Review California legislation regarding naloxone
- Summarize best practices for responsible prescribing and furnishing of naloxone for the complete or partial reversal of opioid-induced respiratory depression

Key Points:

- The age-adjusted opioid-related overdose death rate in California has significantly increased over the last two years, driven primarily by highly potent opioids such as illicitly manufactured fentanyl.

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- Naloxone, a potentially life-saving medication for opioid overdose, may be offered to individuals at risk for opioid overdose. Naloxone prescriptions can also be written directly to third party individuals who might be likely to witness and assist a person at risk of an opioid overdose.
- In recent years, California has passed legislation to expand access to naloxone, including a bill allowing pharmacists to furnish naloxone and [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 2760 \(Wood, Chapter 324\)](#), which requires California providers to offer a prescription for naloxone (or similar) as a rescue medication under certain conditions.
- After AB 2760 became effective on January 1, 2019, there was a 250% increase in overall paid claims for naloxone in the Medi-Cal program between the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019. Of note, there was also a 150% increase in paid claims for pharmacist-furnished naloxone observed during this same time period, despite no additional requirements for pharmacists in the legislation.
- Health care providers should have ongoing conversations with patients, caregivers, and the community about the changing illicit drug supply and increased risk for overdose.

Please Note: Narcan (naloxone) is **fully covered** by Medi-Cal Rx (Magellan) and Medicare Part D. No prior authorization is required.

For questions or comments, please call us at (909) 890-2049.

Sincerely,
IEHP Pharmaceutical Services