A picture containing text

Description automatically generated

P.O Box 30011, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-0330

<Date>

**IMPORTANT PLAN INFORMATION**

<Member First Name> <Member Last Name>

<Mailing Address 1>  
<Mailing Address 2>

<Mailing City>, <Mailing State> <Mailing Zip>

**Education on Opioid Risks and Alternative Treatments**

**This is important information about your Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage.**

**Read this notice carefully.** For help, call one of the numbers listed on the last page under “For More Information and Help with This Notice.”

The purpose of this notice is to provide information about the risks of prolonged opioid use.

Your prescription claims indicate greater than 30 days continuous opioid use.

Prescription opioids can be used to help relieve moderate-to-severe pain and are often prescribed following a surgery or injury, or for certain health conditions. While these medications can

be an important part of treatment, they also carry serious risks of addiction, accidental overdose, and death. The prolonged use of opioids can also lead to tolerance (needing more of the medication for the same pain relief) and physical dependence (experiencing symptoms of withdrawal when a medication is stopped). Even when taken as directed, the use of prescription opioids can have several side effects like constipation, nausea, vomiting, dry mouth, sleepiness, dizziness, confusion, depression, irritability, itching, and difficulty in breathing.

It is important to work with your health care provider to make sure you are getting the safest, most effective care. You might be able to take other medications or do other things to help effectively manage your pain with less long-term risk.

**What Action Should You Take?**

Talk to your health care provider about ways to manage your pain that don’t involve prescription opioids. Some of these options may work better and have fewer risks and side effects. Education on treatment choices and the risks will help you and your provider to find safe and effective care for reaching your personal treatment goals.

**What treatment options don’t involve opioids?**

Chronic pain can often be managed without opioids, and many other options have been shown to work better with fewer side effects. Examples include:

* Over-the-counter medications like Tylenol (acetaminophen), Advil (ibuprofen), and Aleve (naproxen)
* Non-opioid prescriptions such as lidocaine and Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDS)
* Physical therapy and exercise
* Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
* Some medications that are also used for depression or seizures

**How to protect against overdose risk if opioid use is continued long-term?**

We recommend and encourage you to have a discussion with your doctor about getting a prescription for naloxone. Naloxone is a prescription drug that can be given during an opioid overdose and may reverse the effects. In the event of an opioid overdose, this rescue agent could save your life and provide some peace of mind for you and your family members to have available.

**What is medication-assisted treatment (MAT)?**

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is the use of medications in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, which is effective in the treatment of opioid use disorders (OUD) and can help some people to sustain recovery. There are three drugs approved by the FDA for the treatment of opioid dependence: buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone. All three of these treatments have been demonstrated to be safe and effective in combination with counseling and psychosocial support.

**What alternative treatments are covered by your plan?**

Based on the Medicare website, the following are listed for Medicare Coverage of Pain Management:

***Medicare Part B*** (Medical Insurance) helps pay for these services that may help you manage your pain and related issues:

* Medication management
* Behavioral health integration services
* Physical therapy
* Occupational therapy
* Manual manipulation of the spine if medically necessary to correct a subluxation
* Alcohol misuse screenings & counseling
* Depression screenings
* Individual and group therapy
* Health and behavioral assessment and intervention
* Acupuncture for chronic low back pain

***Medicare Part A*** (Hospital Insurance) covers inpatient hospital care

**What additional resources are available to you?**

Visit **www.hhs.gov/opioids** for information about State and Federal public health resources that can help you learn more about opioid medications and how to use them safely.

Visit [**www.medicare.gov/coverage/pain-management**](http://www.medicare.gov/coverage/pain-management) for information on Medicare coverage of pain management.

**For More Information and Help with This Notice**

For more information about any of the information in this notice, please contact Blue MedicareRx Customer Care at <CC PHONE> (TTY: 711), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Thank you,

Blue MedicareRx

Blue MedicareRx (PDP) is a Prescription Drug Plan with a Medicare Contract. Blue MedicareRx Value Plus (PDP) and Blue MedicareRx Premier (PDP) are two Medicare Prescription Drug Plans available to service residents of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Coverage is available to residents of the service area or members of an employer or union group and separately issued by one of the following plans: Anthem Blue Cross® and Blue Shield® of Connecticut, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Rhode Island, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont.

Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc., Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Inc., Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont are the legal entities which have contracted as a joint enterprise with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and are the risk-bearing entities for Blue MedicareRx (PDP) plans. The joint enterprise is a Medicare-approved Part D Sponsor. Enrollment in Blue MedicareRx (PDP) depends on contract renewal.

Independent Licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association ®Registered Marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ®´, SM, TM Registered Marks and Trademarks are property of their respective owners. ©2024 All Rights Reserved.

5246-55051A 061821