![Washington State Health Care Authority]

Overview for clients

Apple Health (Medicaid) Opioid Limits:
What you should know

Effective November 1, 2019, Apple Health will update the Opioid Policy.

What is the Opioid Policy?

The Prescription Drug Program (PDP) within the Health Care Authority (HCA) creates drug policies that explain criteria and limits that must be met in order for Apple Health to pay for a drug. The opioid policy provides the criteria and limits applied to opioids. For details, please see the Opioid Policy.

What is changing?

Effective November 1, 2019, Apple Health will apply a safety limit to the total daily dose of opioids. The dose of different opioids is measured in units called morphine milligram equivalents (MME). Opioid prescriptions or combinations of opioid prescriptions that exceed a daily dose equal to 120 MME will require your prescriber to complete and sign an opioid attestation form. This safety limits helps us ensure your prescriber is following best practices related to your care.

What will stay the same?

The policy will still limit the amount of opioids a person may have if they have never had an opioid before (referred to as opiate naïve). Those limits are:

- No more than 18 doses (approximately a 3-day supply) for patients age 20 or younger.
- No more than 42 doses (approximately a 7-day supply) for patients age 21 or older.

At the point of transition from acute to chronic opioid treatment (defined as six weeks), a prior authorization is required.

Will I have to change my medication?

No. The Apple Health opioid policy is a prevention and patient safety tool. The goal is to support safe and effective use of opioids and to avoid patients from developing opioid use disorder.

Why is the opioid policy changing?

On October 24, 2018, President Trump signed the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment ("SUPPORT") for Patients and Communities Act. The SUPPORT Act includes several provisions directed to the Medicaid program that requires updates to the current opioid policy.