

How PBMs Can Help Clients Prevent Opioid Abuse



Identifying The Issue

Opioid abuse has become an epidemic in the United States¹ and is among the leading causes of death.²

Because they are often prescribed to relieve pain following surgery or injury, opioids affect people from all walks of life. Whether you represent an employer, a health plan, or a state or government entity, you have the power to help prevent opioid abuse.

Changing Directions: How Your Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) Can Help

With our suite of Opioid Safety Solutions, we can help you identify, intervene, and prevent opioid abuse. With one program alone, we were recently able to flag almost 9,000 potential cases of opioid abuse. Here are just some ways that we can help:

The Proactive Approach

Our Concurrent Drug Utilization Review (CDUR) system offers multiple avenues to stop opioid abuse before it happens. By checking member prescriptions against active and prior medications for potential clinical conflicts, we can alert the dispensing pharmacist and preempt abuse.

For example, the system will soft reject a prescription if it detects signs of abuse, such as using multiple pharmacies to pick up multiple opioid prescriptions, known as “pharmacy shopping.”

This system is continually updated. A recent addition alerts the pharmacist when a member with a history of opioid dependence treatment medications attempts to fill an opioid prescription.

The Retrospective Approach

For members who have already received their medications, our Retrospective Drug Utilization Review (RDUR) program examines dispensed medications, identifying and communicating potential opioid abuse to prescribers. Some RDUR programs include:

Opioid Overutilization Program – our clinicians screen each plan for opioid overuse every quarter by analyzing the High Cumulative Dose (HC) Edit report. They may suggest interventions and will recommend members identified for case management to the plan sponsor.

Triple Threat - identifies members using opioids, muscle relaxants, and benzodiazepines/non-benzodiazepine sedative hypnotics together, which can produce a sensation similar to heroin.

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The health and safety of our members is always at the center of our program development. Triple Threat informs prescribers of potentially dangerous medication combinations, while educating members about the risks. Our goal is to reduce the number of members exposed to these potentially dangerous combinations of products.”

Julie Olson

Director of Clinical Programs & Product Development
Navitus Health Solutions

Controlled Substance Monitoring (CSM) - identifies members with an unusually high number of prescribers, pharmacies, and prescriptions for controlled substances. The CSM Repeat Alert identifies members who are repeatedly flagged by CSM.

Provider Education

When you opt in to our Prospective Drug Utilization Review (PDUR) program, we will regularly send prescribers Opioid-Focused Prescriber Insights Reports. These reports help them compare their opioid prescribing patterns to those of their peers and can prevent the over-prescription of opioids.

Formulary Management

With our Quantity Limits Formulary Management tool, you will be able to restrict the dispensing of potentially dangerous medications, such as opioids, by timeframe and/or dosage.

Our Results Are Actionable

Our CDUR program recently flagged nearly 9,000 instances of potential opioid abuse for pharmacist review. Of these, almost 3,500 cases were determined to be actionable, opening the door to prescriber or employer intervention. Meanwhile, the Triple Threat program led to a 31 percent decrease in the use of opioids with muscle relaxants and benzodiazepines/non-

benzodiazepine sedative hypnotics among flagged members. CSM and the CSM Repeat Alert resulted in 50 percent and 31 percent decreases in the overuse of opioids among flagged members, respectively.

The Opioid-Focused Prescriber Insights Report was provided to 221 prescribers less than 10 months after the program's launch. Finally, Quantity Limits are in place for all branded long-acting opioids and for oral fentanyl products.

Taking Action

Opioid abuse affects most plan sponsors but, with Navitus, you have the power to protect your members. With our best-in-class Opioid Safety Solutions, we can provide the guidance to point you in the right direction, with the peace of mind that we are working behind the scenes on your behalf.

Contact your account representative today or go to www.navitus.com to learn more about what your PBM can do for you.

¹ Secretary, HHS Office of the, and Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs (ASPA). "About the Epidemic." HHS.gov, US Department of Health and Human Services, 21 Dec. 2017, www.hhs.gov/opioids/about-the-epidemic/index.html.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Wide-ranging OnLine Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER) [online]. Published July 28, 2014. Available from URL: <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortsq1.html>.