

RETRODUR INTERVENTION NOTICE: BUTORPHANOL

August 7, 2012

Dear Prescriber,

The New York State Medicaid Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Program retrospectively reviews the prescribing and dispensing of outpatient prescription medications in order to ensure that prescriptions are appropriate, medically necessary, and are not likely to result in adverse medical outcomes. At the December 2, 2011 Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Board Meeting, the Board reviewed butorphanol utilization within the NY Medicaid program.

Guidelines for management of pain, based on the most recent information published in 2009 by the American Pain Society, were presented to the Board as well as the most current FDA approved labeling¹. While considering utilization data and clinical information, the Board expressed concerns about safety, the potential for adverse events and the risk of misuse.

The Board recommended that informational letters be sent to prescribers of butorphanol in order to increase awareness of safety concerns and high abuse potential associated with butorphanol therapy, as well as to highlight recently published pain guidelines that do not support the use of this drug. Based on current pain management guidelines and considering cost effectiveness for the New York State Medicaid program, the DUR Board recommends use of a preferred product. The New York State Preferred Drug List is available on the Department of Health website at https://newyork.fhsc.com/downloads/providers/NYRx_PDP_PDL.pdf.

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) recommends against using mixed agonist-antagonists including butorphanol for adult cancer pain. It is further recommended that these agents not be used in combination with opioid agonists².

New York State Medicaid pharmacy claim data indicates that you have written prescription(s) for butorphanol therapy. Please consider this information and the clinical appropriateness of butorphanol therapy, as the DUR Program is concerned that there may be utilization of this medication that is not consistent with current treatment guidelines and FDA approved labeling.

In presenting this information to you, the Drug Utilization Review Program recognizes that safe and effective pharmacotherapy depends on the assessment of the patient's entire clinical profile. We ask that you consider the information provided regarding the prescribing of butorphanol therapy for your patients.

Thank you for your professional assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

John F. Naioti, Jr., R.Ph.
Manager, Drug Utilization Review Program

¹Health Care Association of New Jersey (HCANJ). Pain Management Guideline. Hamilton (NJ): Health Care Association of New Jersey (HCANJ); 2006 Jul 18. 23 p. Available from: <http://www.guideline.gov>.

²National Comprehensive Cancer Network. NCCN clinical practice guidelines on treatment of adult cancer pain. Available at: <http://www.nccn.org>. Accessed February 6, 2012.