



Department of Health

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RETRODUR INTERVENTION NOTICE : **Concurrent Gabapentinoid and Opioid Utilization**

June 1, 2019

Dear Medicaid Provider,

The New York State (NYS) Medicaid Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Program retrospectively reviews the prescribing and dispensing of outpatient prescription medications to ensure that prescriptions are appropriate, medically necessary, and are not likely to result in adverse medical outcomes. Under the purview of the DUR Program, the NYS Medicaid DUR Board reviewed the concurrent utilization of gabapentinoids (gabapentin, pregabalin) with opioids within the NYS Medicaid program. NYS Medicaid pharmacy claims data indicate that you may have written concurrent prescription(s) for gabapentin (dosage >2400 mg/day) OR pregabalin (dosage >600 mg/day for immediate-release [IR] or >660 mg/day for controlled-release [CR]) with an opioid.

The DUR Board evaluated concurrent gabapentinoid and opioid utilization presented by clinical research staff from the State University of New York at Buffalo, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at the February 2019 DUR Board meeting. This review was based on recent safety updates from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Food and Drug Administration noting significant safety concerns associated with concurrent use of gabapentinoids and opioids. Gabapentinoids act as “potentiator” agents, which act to increase the effects of other substances such as opioids. This has resulted in reports of misuse/abuse, serious adverse events (e.g., respiratory depression), and death in patients who utilized both agents concurrently.

The Board considered information relating to FDA-approved indications, safety data, and reviewed retrospective utilization among Medicaid members. The Board recommended educational interventions to prescribers highlighting safety concerns associated with concurrent use of gabapentinoids and opioids, especially at higher doses of gabapentinoids (gabapentin dosage >2400 mg/day) and pregabalin dosage >600 mg/day for IR products or >660 mg/day for CR products).

The Medicaid Pharmacy Program has developed a web page that provides links to resources for the treatment of substance use disorder and the use of opioids/non-opioids for the management of pain. Please see: https://health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/opioid_management/. The Medicaid Update from January 2019 also provides additional information: https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2019/jan19_mu.pdf

In providing this information to you, the DUR 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 concurrent prescribing of gabapentinoids with opioids for your patients.

Thank you for your professional assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

New York State Medicaid DUR Program