

Pre-authorization for Medicaid opioid prescriptions

North Carolina and the nation are experiencing an opioid epidemic. From 1999 to 2016 more than 12,000 North Carolinians died from opioid-related overdoses. In an effort to reduce the oversupply and diversion of prescription opioids prior authorization for opioid analgesic prescriptions for N.C. Medicaid and N.C. Health Choice (NCHC) beneficiaries that meet certain thresholds.

Effective August 27, 2017

Prior approval will be required for opioid analgesic doses for N.C. Medicaid and N.C. Health Choice (NCHC) beneficiaries which:

1. Exceed 120 mg of morphine equivalents per day
2. Are greater than a 14-day supply of any opioid, or,
3. Are non-preferred opioid products on the [NC Medicaid Preferred Drug List \(PDL\)](#)

The prescribing provider may submit prior authorization requests to [NCTracks](#) through the [NCTracks](#) portal or by fax. New opioid analgesic prior authorization forms and revised clinical coverage criteria will be available on the [NCTracks](#) website.

Beneficiaries with diagnosis of pain secondary to cancer will continue to be exempt from prior authorization requirements.

Pharmacy providers may dispense a 72-hour emergency supply for drugs requiring prior authorization. **Federal law requires that this emergency supply be available to Medicaid beneficiaries for drugs requiring prior authorization** (Social Security Act, Section 1927, [42 U.S.C. 1396r-8\(d\)\(5\)\(B\)](#)). Use of this emergency supply will ensure access to medically necessary medications. The system will bypass the prior authorization requirement if an emergency supply is indicated. Pharmacies will use a "3" in the Level of Service field (418-DI) to indicate that the transaction is an emergency fill.

Opioid Criteria Educational Materials

- [Prior Approval Criteria For Opioid Analgesics](#)
- [Non-Opioid Alternatives](#)
- [DMA Opioid Safety - STOP Act Crosswalk](#)
- [FAQ on Naxolone Standing Order](#)
- [Provider Considerations for Tapering of Opioids](#)
- [Preferred Drug List Opioid Analgesics and Combination Therapy Daily MME](#)
- [North Carolina's Opioid Action Plan](#),