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PHARMACY NOTICE: Opioid Safety Limits

Dear Prescriber,

Peach State Health Plan strives to find ways to improve our member's health and safety. Opioids when used properly, can help relieve pain. But when misused, they can cause addiction, overdose, and death. The **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**, **Centers for Disease Control (CDC)** and **Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS)**, provided safety recommendations for opioid medicines. Peach State Health Plan has safety limits on the amount and days' supply on opioid medicines.

- Please refer to the Peach State Health Plan Preferred Drug List for opioid safety limits. **Prior authorization** may be required for opioid use*.
- Use **non-opioid treatments** first-line.
- Only prescribe opioids when alternative treatment is inadequate.
- **Limit** opioid dosages and duration.
- Educate on signs and symptoms of an overdose.
- **Reassess** need and possible taper of opioids.
- Use opioid screening/monitoring (i.e., Opioid Risk Tool)
- Always check The **Georgia Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (GA PDMP)** to monitor the prescribing of controlled substances.
<https://gdna.georgia.gov/georgia-prescription-drug-monitoring-program>
- Collaborate with behavioral health specialist, pharmacists, and nurses.
- **Narcan® Nasal Spray** is available without a prior authorization for high-risk opioid use.
- Prior authorization submissions should include previous use of non-opioid medicines, assessment for continued opioid use and taper, and documentation of PDMP monitoring.

Peach State Health Plan offers a **case management program** to assist with support, such as locating providers, community resources, and information for members with any substance abuse or behavioral health needs. For additional information please call 1-800-704-1484.

Sincerely,
Peach State Health Plan, Pharmacy Department

*Long-term opioid use, Treatment-naïve, High Morphine-Milliequivalents

Resources:

- FDA Drug Safety Communication: FDA warns about serious risks and death when combining opioid pain or cough medicines with benzodiazepines; requires its strongest warning. Link: <https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm518473.htm>
- Centers for Medicaid and CHIP Services. CMCS Informational Bulletin August 5, 2019

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1-800-704-1484
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