# Clinical Policy: Opioid Analgesics*

Reference Number: CP.PMN.97
Effective Date: 02.01.11
Last Review Date: 05.25
Line of Business: Medicaid

Revision Log

**See Important Reminder at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.**

***Requests for transmucosal immediate-release fentanyl products (TIRFs) should be evaluated using the Fentanyl IR (Actiq, Fentora, Lazanda, Subsys) policy – CP.PMN.127.***

**Description**
Opioid analgesics exert their analgesic effect through opiate receptors distributed in tissues throughout the body.

All opioid analgesic therapies (both preferred and non-preferred agents) that do not abide with the short term therapy criteria (I.A) will require prior authorization.

**FDA Approved Indication(s)**
Opioid analgesics are indicated for the management and treatment of moderate to severe pain.

**Policy/Criteria**
*Provider must submit documentation (including such as office chart notes, lab results or other clinical information) supporting that member has met all approval criteria.*

It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation® that opioid analgesics are **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

**I. Initial Approval Criteria**

**A. Short Term Therapy** (Prior authorization will NOT be required for opioid use meeting all of the following criteria. Requests for > 28 day supply of opioid or for extended release opioids will be evaluated using the criteria presented in section I.C. unless the request is for cancer, sickle cell disease or palliative care as presented in Section I.B)**:**

1. Member has received ≤ 28 day supply of opioid in the last 90 days;
2. One of the following (a or b):
   a. For NJ only: Request must be for ≤ 5 day supply;
   b. For all other states: Request is for ≤ 7 day supply;
3. Request is for an immediate release opioid;
4. Member is taking no more than 2 different opioid analgesics concurrently;
5. If request is for an abuse-deterrent formulation (ADF), member must use a generic non-ADF of the same active ingredient as the requested opioid;
6. Total opioid dose does NOT exceed 90 morphine milligram equivalents (MME) per day.

**B. Cancer, Sickle Cell Disease, or Palliative Care** (must meet all)**:**

**Requests for transmucosal immediate-release fentanyl products (TIRFs) should be evaluated using the Fentanyl IR (Actiq, Fentora, Lazanda, Subsys) policy – CP.PMN.127.*

1. Prescribed for pain associated with one of the following (a, b, or c):
   a. Cancer;
   b. Sickle cell disease;
   c. Palliative care (hospice or any terminal condition);
2. Member meets one of the following (a, b, or c):
   a. Request is for treatment associated with cancer for a State with regulations against step therapy in certain oncology settings (see *Appendix E*);
   b. Request is for a preferred drug;
   c. Member has failed two or more preferred drugs, unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or all are contraindicated;
3. Member meets one of the following (a or b):
   a. Request is for treatment associated with cancer for a State with regulations against step therapy in certain oncology settings (see *Appendix E*);
   b. If request is for an ADF, member must use a generic non-ADF of the same active ingredient as the requested opioid;
4. If request is for Oxycontin®, age ≥ 11 years AND one of the following (a or b):
   a. Request is for treatment associated with cancer for a State with regulations against step therapy in certain oncology settings (see *Appendix E*);
   b. Member has failed two other preferred long acting opioids*, unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or all are contraindicated;

   **Long acting opioid therapy may require prior authorization.*
5. If request is for concurrent use of > 2 opioids, prescriber must submit a documented clinical rationale supporting the addition of an extended release opioid and that upward titration of existing opioid analgesics is inappropriate or contraindicated;
6. Request does not exceed health plan quantity limit;
7. **For NJ only,** if member has one of the following (a or b), prescriber shall **provide a prescription for an <u>opioid antidote</u>** and must attest that controlled dangerous substances (e.g., opioids) are continuously prescribed for management of chronic pain:
   a. **<u>One or more</u> prescriptions totaling 90 MME or more per day;**
   b. Is concurrently obtaining an opioid and a benzodiazepine, and document within the patient record the action taken.

**Approval duration: 12 months**

**C. Members Transitioning from Short Term Therapy to Long Term Therapy**
(defined as a claims history of > 28-day supply of opioid within a 90 day period or request for an extended release opioid) (must meet all)**:**

1. Previously received short term opioid therapy via Centene benefit;
2. Prescribed for the treatment of pain unrelated to active cancer, sickle cell disease or palliative care;
3. Member meets one of the following (a or b):
   a. Failure of at least 2 non-opioid ancillary treatments (e.g., non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs [NSAIDs], acetaminophen, anticonvulsants, antidepressants), unless clinically significant adverse effect are experienced or all are contraindicated;

   b. Member has received a total of 90 cumulative days of opioid therapy in the last 120 days;
4. One of the following (a or b):
   a. Request is for a preferred drug;
   b. Member has failed two or more preferred drugs, unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or all are contraindicated;
5. If request is for an extended release agent, documented failure of an immediate release opioid;
6. If request is for an ADF, member must use a generic non-ADF of the same active ingredient as the requested opioid;
7. If request is for Oxycontin, both of the following (a and b):
   a. Age ≥ 11 year;
   b. Member has failed two other preferred long acting opioids*, unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or all are contraindicated;

   **Long acting opioid therapy may require prior authorization.*
8. Member will be maintained on no more than 2 opioid analgesics concurrently;
   **If member requires therapy with two opioid analgesics, regimen must consist of one immediate-release and one extended-release analgesic.*
9. One of the following (a or b):
   a. Total opioid dose is not 90 MME per day or more, or for members who are stable (history of > 7 days of therapy) on doses ≥ 90 MME per day, one of the following is met (i or ii):
      i. Provider's attestation that a dose taper will be attempted;
      ii. Documentation that a dose taper has been attempted within the past 6 months, with the reasons for taper failure;
      **Provider will be advised that doses higher than the current dose will not be approved in the future.*
   b. For HI requests ONLY: Total opioid dose is not more than 120 MME per day, or for members who are stable (history of > 7 days of therapy) on doses > 120 MME per day, one of the following is met (i or ii):
      i. Provider's attestation that a dose taper will be attempted;
      ii. Documentation that a dose taper has been attempted within the past 6 months, with the reasons for taper failure;
      **Provider will be advised that doses higher than the current dose will not be approved in the future.*
10. Provider agrees to continuously assess the member's pain management regimen for possible discontinuation of opioid therapy;
11. Documentation that the provider has reviewed the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) to identify concurrently prescribed controlled substances.

**Approval duration: 3 months**

**D. Other diagnoses/indications – Not applicable**

## II. Continued Therapy

**A. Cancer, Sickle Cell Disease, or Palliative Care** (must meet all)**:**

**Requests for transmucosal immediate-release fentanyl products (TIRFs) should be evaluated using the Fentanyl IR (Actiq, Fentora, Lazanda, Subsys) policy – CP.PMN.127.*

1. Currently receiving therapy for pain associated with cancer, sickle cell disease, or palliative care;
2. If request is for an ADF, member must use a generic non-ADF of the same active ingredient as the requested opioid;
3. If request is for Oxycontin, both of the following (a and b):
   a. Age ≥ 11 year;
   b. Member has failed two other preferred long acting opioids*, unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or all are contraindicated;

   **Long acting opioid therapy may require prior authorization*
4. If member is receiving more than 2 opioid analgesics concurrently, at least one of the following requirements has been met (a or b):
   a. Prescriber previously provided a documented clinical rationale for the use of > 2 opioid analgesics concurrently;
   b. Prescriber provides a documented clinical rationale supporting that addition of an extended release agent or upward titration of existing opioid analgesics is inappropriate or contraindicated;
5. Request does not exceed health plan quantity limit.

**Approval duration: 12 months**

**B. Long Term Therapy** (must meet all)**:**

1. Member meets one of the following (a or b):
   a. Currently receiving long term (defined as a history of chronic opioid use in the 3 months preceding the request) opioid therapy via Centene benefit
   b. Documentation supports that member is currently receiving opioids and has received this medication for at least 28 days in last 90 days;
2. One of the following (a or b):
   a. Request is for a preferred drug;
   b. Member has failed two or more preferred drugs, unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or all are contraindicated;
3. If request is for an ADF, member must use a generic non-ADF of the same active ingredient as the requested drug;
4. If request is for Oxycontin, both of the following (a and b):
   a. Age ≥ 11 year;
   b. Member has failed two other preferred long acting opioids*, unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or all are contraindicated;

   **Long acting opioid therapy may require prior authorization*
5. Prescriber provides documentation supporting inability to discontinue opioid therapy;
6. Member will not be maintained on > 2 opioid analgesics concurrently;

   **If member requires therapy with two opioid analgesics, regimen must consist of one immediate-release and one extended-release analgesic*
7. If total opioid dose > 120 MME per day for HI ONLY or ≥ 90 MME per day, one of the following is met (a, b, c, or d):
   a. Dose reduction has occurred since previous approval, if applicable;
   b. A dose taper has been attempted within the past 6 months and was not successful;

      **Reason(s) for taper failure must be provided.*

c. Medical justification why a taper should not be attempted or for any dose increase that has occurred since previous approval, if applicable;
d. Prescribed by or in consultation with a pain management specialist;

8. Documentation that the provider has reviewed the PDMP to identify concurrently prescribed controlled substances.

**Approval duration: 3 months**

**C. Other diagnoses/indications – Not applicable**

## III. Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized: Not applicable

## IV. Appendices/General Information

*Appendix A: Abbreviation Key*

ADF: abuse-deterrent formulation
FDA: Food and Drug Administration
MME: morphine milligram equivalents
NSAID: non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug
PDL: preferred drug list
PDMP: prescription drug monitoring program

*Appendix B: Therapeutic Alternatives*

Not applicable

*Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings*

- Contraindication(s): significant respiratory depression; acute or severe bronchial asthma; gastrointestinal obstruction, including paralytic ileus; hypersensitivity to the opioid active ingredient, salts, or any component of the product.
- Boxed warning(s): potential for addiction, abuse, and misuse; life-threatening respiratory depression; accidental ingestion; neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome; cytochrome P450 3A4 interactions; risks from concomitant use with benzodiazepines or other CNS depressants.

*Appendix D: General Information*

| Opioid Oral MME Conversion Factors | |
|---|---|
| **Type of Opioid (strength units)** | **MME Conversion Factor** |
| Codeine (mg) | 0.15 |
| Dihydrocodeine (mg) | 0.25 |
| Fentanyl buccal or SL tablets, or lozenge/troche (mcg) | 0.13 |
| Fentanyl film or oral spray (mcg) | 0.18 |
| Fentanyl nasal spray (mcg) | 0.16 |
| Fentanyl patch (mcg) | 7.2 |
| Hydrocodone (mg) | 1 |
| Hydromorphone (mg) | 4 |
| Levorphanol tartrate (mg) | 11 |
| Meperidine hydrochloride (mg) | 0.1 |

| Opioid Oral MME Conversion Factors | |
|---|---|
| Methadone (mg) | |
| > 0, ≤ 20 | 4 |
| > 20, ≤ 40 | 8 |
| > 40, ≤ 60 | 10 |
| > 60 | 12 |
| Morphine (mg) | 1 |
| Opium (mg) | 1 |
| Oxycodone (mg) | 1.5 |
| Oxymorphone (mg) | 3 |
| Pentazocine (mg) | 0.37 |
| Tapentadol (mg) | 0.4 |
| Tramadol (mg) | 0.1 |

*Appendix E: States with Regulations against Redirections in Cancer*

| State | Step Therapy Prohibited? | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| FL | Yes | For stage 4 metastatic cancer and associated conditions |
| GA | Yes | For stage 4 metastatic cancer. Redirection does not refer to review of medical necessity or clinical appropriateness |
| IA | Yes | For standard of care stage 4 cancer drug use, supported by peer-reviewed, evidence-based literature, and approved by FDA |
| LA | Yes | For stage 4 advanced, metastatic cancer or associated conditions. Exception if "clinically equivalent therapy, contains identical active ingredient(s), and proven to have same efficacy |
| MS | Yes | **Applies to HIM requests only** For advanced metastatic cancer and associated conditions |
| NV | Yes | Stage 3 and stage 4 cancer patients for a prescription drug to treat the cancer or any symptom thereof of the covered person |
| OH | Yes | **Applies to Commercial and HIM requests only** For stage 4 metastatic cancer and associated conditions |
| OK | Yes | **Applies to HIM requests only** For advanced metastatic cancer and associated conditions |
| PA | Yes | For stage 4 advanced, metastatic cancer |
| TN | Yes | For advanced metastatic cancer and associated conditions |
| TX | Yes | For stage 4 advanced, metastatic cancer and associated conditions |

## V. Dosage and Administration

Please refer to the package insert of the requested drug for information on appropriate dosage and administration.

## VI. Product Availability

Please refer to the package insert of the requested drug for product availability information.

## VII. References

1. Dowell D, Ragan KR, Jones CM, Baldwin GT, and Chou R. CDC clinical practice guideline for prescribing opioids for pain – United States, 2022. MMWR Recomm Rep 2022;71(No. RR-3):1-95.
2. Kampman K, Jarvis M. American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) national practice guideline for the use of medications in the treatment of addiction involving opioid use. J Addict Med 2015 Sep-Oct; 9(5):358-67.
3. State of Hawaii Dept of Human Services. QI-1926 Support Act Med-QUEST Division Minimum Standards Effective October 1, 2019. Available at: https://medquest.hawaii.gov/en/plans-providers/provider-memo.html. Accessed January 9, 2025.
4. State of Hawaii Dept of Human Services. QI-2148 Support Act Med-QUEST Division Minimum Standards Effective October 1, 2019 (Replaces QI-1926). State https://medquest.hawaii.gov/content/dam/formsanddocuments/provider-memos/qi-memos/qi-memos-2021/QI-2148%20Replaces%20QI-1926%20Support%20ACT%20MQD%20Minimum%20Standards%20Eff%2010.1.2019%20-%20signed.pdf. Accessed January 9, 2025.
5. State of New Jersey Dept of Law and Public Safety Division of Consumer Affairs. Naloxone prescribing by health care practitioners – DCA Administrative Order No. 2020-08. Available at: https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/Documents/Naloxone%20rule%20adoption.pdf. Accessed January 9, 2025.
6. Dowell D, Ragan KR, Jones CM, Baldwin GT, and Chou R. CDC clinical practice guideline for prescribing opioids for pain – United States, 2022. MMWR Recomm Rep 2022;71(No. RR-3):1-95.

| Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals | Date | P&T Approval Date |
|---|---|---|
| 1Q 2021 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated. | 12.01.20 | 02.21 |
| 1Q 2022 annual review: no significant changes; changed "Medical justification" language to "Member must use"; references reviewed and updated. | 11.23.21 | 02.22 |
| 1Q 2023 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated. | 11.08.22 | 02.23 |
| Wellcare New Jersey and Hawaii Medicaid policy (WCG.CP.PMN.97) retired and combined by adding the following: NJ specific naloxone requirement for the duration of the COVID-19 State of Emergency or the Public Health Emergency, added NJ specific request must be for ≤ 5 day supply to short term therapy criteria and for HI requests only total daily opioid dose is not more than 120 MME for members transition from short term therapy to long term therapy. | 02.15.23 | 05.23 |

| Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals | Date | P&T Approval Date |
|---|---|---|
| 2Q 2024 annual review: for NJ, removed the statement "for the duration of the COVID-19 State of Emergency or the Public Health Emergency" as the requirement to provide a prescription for an opioid antidote is independent of the PHE and an ongoing regulation in the state; references reviewed and updated. | 01.19.24 | 05.24 |
| Added by-passing of redirection if state regulations do not allow step therapy in certain oncology settings along with Appendix E. | 06.05.24 | |
| 2Q 2025 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated. | 01.09.25 | 05.25 |

**Important Reminder**

This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. The Health Plan makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved. "Health Plan" means a health plan that has adopted this clinical policy and that is operated or administered, in whole or in part, by Centene Management Company, LLC, or any of such health plan's affiliates, as applicable.

The purpose of this clinical policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results. Coverage decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions, and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable Health Plan-level administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by the Health Plan. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. The Health Plan retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

This clinical policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment, or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible

for the medical advice and treatment of members. This clinical policy is not intended to recommend treatment for members. Members should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Providers referred to in this clinical policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom the Health Plan has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of the Health Plan.

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**Note: For Medicaid members**, when state Medicaid coverage provisions conflict with the coverage provisions in this clinical policy, state Medicaid coverage provisions take precedence. Please refer to the state Medicaid manual for any coverage provisions pertaining to this clinical policy.