Navigating the Opioid Crisis in Tennessee - a Health Plan Perspective

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The Epidemic in Tennessee

- Tennessee ranks 3rd in opioid prescribing nationally, creating a public health crisis in our state.
- More Tennesseans died in 2016 of drug overdose than roadway fatalities.
- More than 1,000 babies were born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome in Tennessee in 2016.
- 55% of those using prescription drugs recreationally got them from a friend or relative.
- Tennessee shares borders with 8 states.
Our Commitment

+ To promote appropriate pain management and thereby reduce member addiction, overdoses, and deaths.

+ To establish policies and procedures to prevent overprescribing while ensuring those whose medical conditions warrant managed usage will have access to these medications.

+ To ensure our effort complements existing initiatives sharing the same goals.
Our Strategy

- Conducted an in-depth review of guidelines from various agencies
- Evaluated industry-level limits and authorization requirements
- Convened an external advisory panel for feedback and development of stepwise approach
- Developed a communication plan for prescribers, patients, and the public
- Executed changes in coverage requirements
- Provided philanthropic support for awareness and community interventions
Our Policies

Formulary

+ Expanded and modified Quantity Limits based on Cumulative Morphine Equivalent Dose (MEqD)

+ Prior Authorization required for all patients receiving long-acting opioids

+ Continue to cover abuse deterrents as well as medication assisted treatments

Results

+ Completed ~18K Prior Authorization and Quantity Limit requests

+ Average approval rating of ~55%

+ 6% reduction in opioid claims

+ 10% reduction in average MEqD

+ Received mixed feedback from prescribers and employers but overall positive
Patient Support

- Integrated medical and behavioral health approach to case management for at-risk members
- Specialized approach for expectant mothers with opioid dependence
- Collaborative program with state agencies for infants born with neonatal abstinence syndrome
Prescriber Support

- Established partnerships to promote best practices in prescribing
- Scorecards that provide evaluation of a prescriber’s opioid prescribing patterns compared to in-network peers
- Guidance and consultation on treatment plans and clinical pathways
- Notification of patients at high risk for potential abuse
- Education and training for emerging prescribers
Community Investments

+ $2.6M BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation investment supporting Count It! Lock It! Drop It! to promote safe medication storage and disposal

+ $250,000 Foundation grant provides:
  - Naloxone training
  - supplies to law enforcement

+ More than $2M Foundation Support for addiction treatment
Next Steps

- Reconvene external advisory panel
- Optimize utilization management strategies
- Proactive outreach directly to patients
- Review non-medical offerings
- Ongoing BlueCross Health Foundation support
Thank You