

Understanding the epidemic and working to address opioid misuse



83.7% of drug overdose deaths in Philadelphia in 2019 involved an opioid¹

The opioid epidemic is gripping our nation and our community:

- Nearly 450,000 people died from overdoses involving any opioid from 1999 to 2019²
- 41 people die every day from overdoses that involve prescription opioids²
- From 2018 to 2019, Philadelphia saw a 3% increase in the total number of unintentional drug overdose deaths¹

As the health care partner to one in three Americans, Independence Blue Cross (Independence) and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association stand committed to our members and to fighting this growing public health crisis.



COVID-19 IMPACT

Drug overdoses have increased almost 18% after stay-at-home orders were implemented across the country in mid-March 2020.³

Independence is working to help employers of all sizes support their employees with a three-pronged approach to addressing substance use disorder: **prevention, treatment, and support.**

1

PREVENTION



With the goal of dramatically reducing the number of opioids prescribed over the next five years, we manage and monitor our members' prescription usage and combat potential misuse of opioids by:

- ✓ Enforcing five-day supply limits*
- ✓ Requiring prior authorizations for prescriptions greater than 90 morphine-equivalent doses and long-acting versions of narcotics†
- ✓ Supporting point-of-sale system alerts to pharmacists
- ✓ Promoting education and resources for patients and providers

80%

of heroin additions start with prescription pain medication⁴

SMARTER NETWORK MANAGEMENT

Working with physicians and pharmacies to effectively manage patients' pain while minimizing leftover opioids is a complex problem that Independence continues to address through a two-part strategy:

Identifying prescribers with irregular prescribing practices:

We analyze provider prescription patterns and conduct drug utilization reviews to address any potential inappropriate practices as well as provide resources to help providers and members

Detecting, preventing, and reporting potential fraud and misuse:

To determine which pharmacies, prescribers, and members may be involved in inappropriate activity or prescribing, all utilization is run through 63 unique pharmacy rules, including seven dedicated to the detection of opioid misuse

2

TREATMENT



Our national network of providers includes an extensive list of substance use disorder facilities that offer various treatment levels. Independence health plans include coverage for:

- ✓ In-network substance use disorder rehabilitation facilities and behavioral health providers, specialists, and therapists who treat substance use disorder
- ✓ Medication-assisted treatments such as methadone, Vivitrol®, and medications containing buprenorphine, like Suboxone®
- ✓ No member cost-sharing for injectable and nasal spray formulations of naloxone, such as NARCAN®

HELP IS HERE

Nearly 100 rehabilitation facilities and more than 5,000 behavioral health specialists are in the Independence network

3

SUPPORT



Independence is working with our counterparts at other Blue plans to turn the tide on substance use disorder and addiction through our national initiatives:

- ✓ **Promoting education and understanding** of opioid risks and supporting well-informed public policy through community engagements and partnerships
- ✓ **Fostering research** that helps to create a better system of care and reduce relapse rates
- ✓ **Ensuring patient-focused care** through adherence to nationally accepted, evidence-based care and treatment guidelines

PROMISING RESULTS AMONG INDEPENDENCE MEMBERS

46% reduction in opioid utilizers = **342,000** fewer members using opioids

40% reduction in opioid prescriptions = **100,000** fewer opioid prescriptions

The fight continues: IBX resources available to your employees

- ▶ Mental health and substance use disorder tools and resources members can access by logging in at ibx.com, such as coverage and benefits, self-assessment programs, and access to care
- ▶ Ongoing communications and education on CDC guidelines for prescribing opioids
- ▶ A provider lookup tool and reputable opioid and substance use disorder resources
- ▶ Links to help members find drug take-back sites

Learn more about how Independence and the Blues are fighting substance use disorder. Visit www.ibx.com/fightopioidaddiction.

1. Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Substance Use Philadelphia, Unintentional Overdose Deaths, 2020, <https://www.substanceusephilly.com/unintentional-overdose-deaths>. Accessed January 11, 2021.

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Opioid Data Analysis and Resources, <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/analysis.html>. Accessed March 19, 2020.

3. U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Erasing the Stigma: Ending the Opioid Epidemic Webinar, September 28, 2020, <https://www.uschamber.com/event/erasing-the-stigma>

4. City of Philadelphia, About Opioids, <https://www.phila.gov/programs/combating-the-opioid-epidemic/about-opioids/>. Accessed January 11, 2021.

*Cumulative-day supply limit of five days per 30 days for low-dose opioids. Accessed February 12, 2020.

† For all high-dose opioids, long-term use, and opioid-containing patches