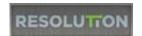


a Berkley Company

RESOLUTION

Options Over Opioids for Pain Management





# OPTIONS OVER OPIOIDS FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT

#### Are You Aware?

Each year over 200 million opioid prescriptions are given out in the United States. Opioids are a class of drugs, which includes the illegal substance heroin. Several prescription pain relievers, such as Oxycodone, are also opioids. One of America's current crises, the opioid epidemic, is the result of opioid pain relievers being overprescribed. This has led to substance abuse, addiction, and in some cases, death by overdose. However, a recent study shows that non-opioid treatment may be just as effective at relieving pain.

#### Options over Opioids:

- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) such as familiar brand names Advil, Motrin, Aleve, Bayer and Excedrin are also available in prescription level doses.
- Acetaminophen, better known as Tylenol, is another common pain reliever that can be used in place of opioids.
- Some patients respond to the usage of antidepressants, especially for nerve pain.
- Another option may be anti-epileptics. But results vary from patient to patient.
- Multimodal Therapy is the combination of medications, such as antiinflammatory drugs with acetaminophen, to reduce the need for opioids, particularly after surgery.

For a complete analysis of the Center for Disease Control's recommendations regarding opioids, see this article "Managing Chronic Pain Without Opioids."

#### Are You Prepared?

Help Employees Understand the Danger

Many employees are unaware of the dangers opioid pain relievers pose. Provide education about opioids and statistics regarding the risk of substance abuse and addiction. This will enable employees to be informed should they become injured and require pain management options.

#### Help Employees Understand their Benefits

Within the context of your company health and/or workers' compensation plan, it is also important employees understand their coverage regarding





## OPTIONS OVER OPIOIDS FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT

pain management. Many plans do not cover opioids or only cover a certain amount. This is another reason to help employees learn to advocate for non-opioid options. Encourage employees to be an active part of their own recovery by inquiring about opioid alternatives for managing their pain.

#### What Next?

#### Manage Your Benefits

In the excellent article, "Employees Take Steps to Address Opioid Crisis," the Society for Human Resource Management offers several options employers can consider. In the forefront is limiting the quantity and coverage of opioid prescriptions within company healthcare plans. This is happening simultaneously with expansion of coverage for non-drug options such as physical therapy.

#### **Educate Employees**

By increasing workplace communication and training regarding the dangers of opioid drugs, employers are enabling employees to advocate for themselves. Plan Against Pain may help employees understand options beyond opioids for pain relief.

Also, employees should be aware of the signs and symptoms of substance abuse, so that they may seek help for themselves or others.

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### Common opioid abuse symptoms to watch for include:

- inability to quit drug or taking more than prescribed amount
- poor coordination
- drowsiness
- physical agitation
- slurred speech
- mood swings
- slurred speech





## OPTIONS OVER OPIOIDS FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT



#### Offer Options Over Opioids

Continue to reinforce the idea that opioids are not the only pain relief available. The usage of multi-drug therapy has proven to be both effective and non-addictive for chronic pain management. Refer your employees to their employee assistance program if they have questions regarding their benefits and coverage for pain relief.

#### The Berkley Industrial Comp Difference

Our dedicated team of industry and medical professionals is aware and concerned about the opioid crisis in America. Despite statistics linking oxycodone and hydrocodone to the most overdose deaths, these continue to be the most commonly prescribed drugs for pain relief.

At Berkley Industrial Comp, we are committed to returning employees to work with optimal outcomes. Therefore, we created our Narcotic Risk Reduction program, OnPoint, which focuses on helping employees remain drug free.

By utilizing a focused prescription drug program, Berkley Industrial Comp fills 46% fewer narcotics prescriptions than our competitors. This places us 35% below the national average for billed narcotics. Not only does this save your company money, but also helps restore employees to their healthiest state following an injury. This way they can return to their everyday lives and the job they enjoy.

Berkley Industrial Comp is pleased to share this material with its customers. Please note, however, that nothing in this document should be construed as legal advice or the provision of professional consulting services. This material is for general informational purposes only, and while reasonable care has been utilized in compiling this information, no warranty or representation is made as to accuracy or completeness.



If you have concerns regarding options over opioids, contact your RESOLUTION Specialist.