

State of Vermont

Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA)

NOB 1 South, 280 State Drive

Waterbury, VT 05671-1010

July 15, 2021

****Attention Providers ****

Updated Age Edits for Codeine Pain and Cough Medications

The Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Board is composed of practicing Vermont pharmacists and physicians who are responsible for reviewing and advising the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) about drug utilization for Vermont Medicaid members. The Retrospective Drug Utilization Review (Retro DUR) program is a program designed to promote appropriate drug utilization and improve the quality of patient care. The DUR Board recently conducted a Retrospective DUR analysis evaluating use of codeine in children based on an FDA safety alert issued in April 2017. The safety alert stated that the use of codeine is contraindicated in the pediatric population younger than 12 years old and the FDA also issued a warning about use in those ages 12-18 who are obese or have conditions such as obstructive sleep apnea or severe lung disease. These drugs carry serious risks in these populations, including slowed or difficult breathing and death.

A review of pharmacy dispensing data from 2019-2020 identified that codeine pain and cough medications continue to be prescribed in a small but significant percentage of patients 12 and under. As a result of this analysis, the Board recommended additional edits be placed on the use of codeine in children 12 and under. Therefore, effective **July 30th, 2021**, DVHA is implementing a prior authorization requirement for the use of codeine in anyone 12 and under.

For questions, please contact the Change Healthcare Pharmacy Help Desk at 1-844-679-5362. Vermont providers can also send inquiries via email to PBA_VTHelpdesk@changehealthcare.com . Thank you for your continued support of Vermont's pharmacy benefits programs.

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