

Pain Parity for Maine

Preventing Opioid Use Disorder Before It Begins



Pain is one of the most common reasons people visit their doctor.

Each year, nearly 80 million Americansⁱ seek treatment to manage acute pain symptoms and opioids are often prescribed as a solution. While they can be effective, they can also pose significant health risks and increase chances of opioid dependency.ⁱⁱ

But breakthroughs in pain medication are enabling patients to have a choice in their pain management. Amidst the ongoing opioid epidemic, it is critical that patients have access to the treatments they want and need to address their pain.



Need for increased access to all pain treatment options

- Within one year of receiving an opioid medication to manage acute pain, approximately 85,000 Americans were diagnosed with an opioid use disorder.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Prescribing rates have fallen, but opioid use disorders and overdoses remain high. In 2023, Maine reported:
 - More than 1,500 opioid-overdose related emergency room visits^{iv}
 - More than 500 opioid overdose deaths^v
 - More than 171,000 doses of naloxone distributed^{vi}
 - A dispensing rate of 33.8 opioid prescriptions per 100 persons^{vii}
- Furthermore, in Maine, opioid use disorder cost Medicaid over \$255 million in excess costs in 2022.^{viii}



Pain parity legislation for equal access to pain treatment options

Across the country, states are introducing legislation to expand access to non-opioid treatments and therapies. These policy efforts, often referred to as “pain parity” legislation, address the health insurance barriers many patients face when trying to access non-opioid treatment options. Pain parity legislation ensures patients are not disadvantaged when accessing non-opioid options by:

- Prohibiting the use of utilization controls such as prior authorization and step therapy
- Equalizing cost-sharing for the non-opioid prescription drug and the opioid prescription drug



Pain parity legislation in Maine

In Maine there is important legislation focused on pain parity to help patients and families.

L.D. 2096

State Senator Troy Jackson (D-1) introduced and passed L.D. 2096, a bill that ensures access to pain management services in health insurance plans by:

- Requiring health insurers to develop and submit a plan to the Maine Bureau of Insurance for review and approval of the inclusion of non-opioid pain management services and treatments. Upon approval, insurers must develop and disseminate related educational materials

Contact your representative to ensure Maine's pain parity legislation is implemented and help prevent addiction before it begins.

www.legislature.maine.gov/

Visit www.families-network.org to learn more about Take Control of Pain and the state of pain parity across the U.S.

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iv. State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services. 2025. Emergency Room Visits (Syndromic Surveillance). <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/data-reports/health-and-safety/emergency-room-visits-syndromic-surveillance>

v. KFF. 2023. Opioid Overdose Deaths and Opioid Overdose Deaths as a Percent of All Drug Overdose Deaths. <https://www.kff.org/mental-health/state-indicator/opioid-overdose-deaths/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

vi. Maine Naloxone Distribution Initiative. 2023. End-of-Year Report on State-Supplied Naloxone Kit Ordering and Distribution. <https://mainedrugdata.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/MNDI-2023-annual-report-final.pdf>

vii. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2024. Opioid Dispensing Rate Maps. <https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/data-research/facts-stats/opioid-dispensing-rate-maps.html>

viii. Health Management Associates. 2025. Opioid Use Disorder in the Medicaid Fee-For-Service Program Economic Analysis. <https://www.healthmanagement.com/wp-content/uploads/Opioid-Use-Disorder-Economic-Impact-on-Medicaid-Program-073125.pdf>

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