Pain Parity for Vermont

Preventing Opioid Use Disorder Before It Begins

Take Control of Pain

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

Each year, nearly 80 million Americans[i] 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. Between 2019 and 2023, Vermont reported:
  - More than 2,389 opioid-overdose related emergency room visits[iv]
  - More than 960 opioid overdose deaths[v]
  - An opioid dispensing rate of 27.9 prescriptions per 100 persons[vi]
  - A naloxone dispensing rate of 0.4 prescriptions per 100 persons[vii]
- Furthermore, in Vermont, opioid use disorder cost Medicaid over $151 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

There is currently no pain parity legislation in Vermont

Contact your representative to let them know Vermont needs pain parity and help prevent addiction before it begins.

https://legislature.vermont.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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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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