

Pain Parity for Connecticut

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, Connecticut reported:
 - More than 4,600 suspected opioid-overdose related emergency room visits^{iv}
 - Nearly 1,200 opioid overdose deaths, 90% of all drug overdose deaths^v
 - 32.4 opioid prescriptions dispensed per 100 persons^{vi}
 - 0.5 naloxone doses distributed per 100 persons^{vii}
- Furthermore, in Connecticut, opioid use disorder cost Medicaid over \$546 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 Connecticut

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

S.B. 1474

Connecticut’s Human Services Committee introduced S.B. 1474, legislation that requires non-opioid pain management training for prescribers of opioids who receive Medicaid reimbursement.

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

<https://www.cga.ct.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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ii. Dydyk AM, Jain NK, Gupta M. Opioid Use Disorder: Evaluation and Management; January 17, 2024; In: StatPearls. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK553166/>

iii. Schoenfeld AJ, et al. An Evaluation of the Incidence of Opioid Use Disorder Among People with Acute and Chronic Pain Managed with Prescription Opioids and the Associated Economic and Societal Burden in the United States. Presented at PAINWeek 2024, Las Vegas, NV.

iv. EpiCenter Syndromic Surveillance System. 2024. Rate per 100,000 Population and Count of Emergency Department and Urgent Care Center Visits for Suspected Opioid Overdoses Among Connecticut Residents, by Resident Local Health Department/District, 2023. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2024. Opioid Dispensing Rate Maps. https://portal.ct.gov/dph/-/media/dph/injury-and-violence-prevention/opioid-overdose-data/syndromic-surveillance-maps/lhd_2023_maps_opioid.pdf?rev=65757af1a3ee45c6aa759170ca5ea4f9&hash=ECC687D915BBF8C2641807877042A5CD

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. 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>

vii. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2024. Naloxone Dispensing Rate Maps. <https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/data-research/facts-stats/naloxone-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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