

Pain Parity for New Jersey

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, New Jersey reported:
 - More than 8,600 opioid-overdose related emergency room visits^{iv}
 - More than 2,800 opioid overdose deaths^v
 - An opioid dispensing rate of 26.6 prescriptions per 100 persons^{vi}
 - A naloxone dispensing rate of 1.2 per 100 persons^{vii}
- Furthermore, in New Jersey, opioid use disorder cost Medicaid over \$665 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 New Jersey

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

BILL A1821

State Representatives Anthony S. Verrelli (D-15), Margie Donlon (D-11) and Carol A. Murphy (D-7) introduced A1821, legislation that prohibits health insurers from denying coverage of nonopioid prescription drugs in favor of opioid prescription drugs.

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

www.njleg.state.nj.us/

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. Drug-related Hospital Visits. 2023. New Jersey Department of Health. https://www.nj.gov/health/populationhealth/opioid/opioid_hospital.shtml

v. New Jersey SUDORS Overdose Mortality Data Explorer. 2023. New Jersey Department of Health. <https://www.nj.gov/health/populationhealth/opioid/sudors.shtml>

vi. New Jersey Department of Health. 2024. New Jersey Prescription Monitoring Program. https://www.nj.gov/health/populationhealth/opioid/opioid_pmp.shtml

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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