



Continue efforts on substance use disorder

Over several years, Congress has authorized dozens of grant programs to help to turn the tide of the continuing epidemic of substance use disorder, particularly opioids. It is critical that congressional appropriators ensure these programs receive the necessary funds to support and increase access to treatment and prevention through both federal and federally-supported state and local efforts.

Beyond critically needed funding, there are additional steps that federal and state elected officials can take to increase access to treatment and prevention. Among them:

Remove prior authorization, step therapy, and other inappropriate administrative burdens or barriers that delay or deny care for medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder.

- Medication-assisted treatment is a proven medical model to support recovery and save lives. All payers, including federally regulated self-insured plans, Medicare, and Medicaid should end prior authorization and other unnecessary utilization management protocols for the treatment of opioid use disorder.

Remove administrative and other barriers to comprehensive, multimodal, multidisciplinary pain care.

- Patients must have access to the right treatment at the right time without administrative barriers or delay.
- To continue reducing prescriptions for opioid medications, payers must increase access to non-opioid alternatives—and patients, physicians and other providers should take advantage of enhanced education to determine appropriate alternative pain treatments (including pharmaceutical alternatives), restorative therapies such as physical or occupational therapy, interventional procedures and behavioral health approaches.
- A detailed regulatory review should be conducted of formulary and benefit design by payers and pharmacy benefit managers to ensure that patients have affordable, timely access to non-opioid pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic alternatives.

Enforce meaningful oversight and enforcement of state and federal mental health and substance use disorder parity laws.

- Insurers must be held accountable for complying with their legal obligations to have mental health and substance use disorder parity coverage that is on par with medical and surgical benefits, as well as addiction medicine available and psychiatric physicians not only in the network but also accepting new patients.