

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Department of Health Care Finance**



Office of the Senior Deputy Director

**DHCF Transmittal # 19-11**

**TO:** District of Columbia Managed Care Organizations, the Managed Care Organization Network, and the Fee for Service Network

**FROM:** Melisa Byrd *MB*  
Senior Deputy Director/ Medicaid Director

**DATE:** March 29, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Removal of Prior Authorization Requirements for Medication-Assisted Treatment

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The purpose of this transmittal is to introduce Policy Number: HCDMA-19-001 which removes the Prior Authorization requirements for Buprenorphine containing drug products and Vivitrol.

In October 2017, a group of stakeholders from the public and private sectors convened for a summit focused on how to jointly address Washington, DC's opioid epidemic. Out of the summit, the Strategic Planning Working Group was created. In late November 2017, the work group members began to conduct stakeholder engagement sessions to assess what was needed regarding prevention and early intervention, harm reduction, acute treatment, sustained recovery, and criminal justice. The information from these sessions and the feedback from work group members was used to create a draft plan. The Plan covers the full array of prevention, treatment and recovery supports. It consists of seven (7) goals with multiple supporting strategies. In particular, the intend of Goal 1 is to reduce legislative and regulatory barriers to access MAT treatment.

In January 2019, The City Council of the District of Columbia likewise introduced the Behavioral Health Parity Act, which relieves utilization control, other than those processes specified by the American Society of Addiction Medicine; Prior authorization; Step therapy; and Lifetime restriction limits for Medication Assisted Treatment.

As a result of the Strategic Planning Working Group and the 2018 Behavioral Health Parity Act, the Department of Health Care Finance revised policy number: DHCF 003-16, which formerly permitted a seven (7) day supply of prescribed Buprenorphine containing products to be dispensed to a beneficiary if the prescriber is awaiting the preauthorization. The revised policy HCDMA permits Buprenorphine containing products and Vivitrol to be dispensed without a prior authorization.

Effective April 1, 2019 qualified Medicaid providers may prescribe Suboxone and Vivitrol without a Prior Authorization in accordance to this policy.

For questions regarding this transmittal, please contact JaVon Oliver, Behavioral Health Coordinator, Health Care Delivery and Management Administration at [javon.oliver2@dc.gov](mailto:javon.oliver2@dc.gov) or (202) 478-2434.