

Opioid Management Solution (OMS)

Supporting the safe use of opioids



Opioids are one of the most addictive prescribed medications. However, they're effective for the treatment of severe, acute, and chronic pain. They can also help manage the side effects of cancer treatment and palliative care.

In collaboration with our Pharmacy Benefits Manager, our OMS repays plan members and eligible dependents in a way that supports the safe use of opioids. By adding additional opioid medication safety measures to your plan, you can help decrease risks and manage opioid use.

Each year thousands of people in Canada are affected by opioid misuse:



36,442

apparent opioid toxicity deaths between January 2016 and December 2022¹



5,265

opioid-related poisoning hospitalizations occurred in 2022²



35,971

Emergency Medical Services responses to suspected opioid-related overdoses in 2022³



How our program helps to protect your plan members

Adding this program to your drug plan may provide plan members with more protection by:

- reducing early exposure to opioids,
- identifying high opioid dosages and potential duplication of therapies,
- helping prevent dependence and misuse.

This program can also help to reduce the risk of health issues and costs related to opioid misuse.

How the program works

The OMS provides two types of controls that plan members can use individually or together.

- **Drug supply limit:** this program applies to plan members who haven't had an opioid prescription in the last 180 days. It limits the first fill to a 7-day short-acting opioid supply. Their pharmacist can help them switch from a long-acting opioid to a short-acting opioid, which will lessen the risks of side effects and reduce the risk of long-term opioid use.
- **Daily dose limit:** the opioid dose limit varies depending on whether or not plan members have received an opioid prescription claim in the last 180 days. By applying a daily dose limit, the OMS supports the safe use of opioids. If plan members try to duplicate therapies, their pharmacist will receive an alert.

The OMS is an additional program to help you protect the health of your plan members. Opioids have a role in pain management; however, it's important we work together to promote the safe use of them. We encourage you to add this optional program to your group benefits plan.

Questions?

Contact your Sun Life Group Benefits Representative.

¹ Government of Canada, Opioid- and Stimulant-related Harms in Canada Published:(June 2023), <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/substance-related-harms/opioids-stimulants>

² Idem

³ Idem

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