

COVID-19 RISK ALERT



June 9, 2020

New Requirement During COVID-19: Prescription of Naloxone with Opioid

The NJ Division of Consumer Affairs (NJDCA) issued [Administrative Order \(AO\) 2020-08](#) on May 21, 2020, which was effective immediately and will remain in effect until the end of the public health emergency (PHE) or state of emergency, whichever is later. It requires the co-prescription of the opioid antidote, Naloxone, under certain circumstances. The purpose of the AO is to respond to concerns that individuals whose ability to obtain treatment for many non-COVID-19 conditions, including opioid use disorder (OUD), may have been adversely affected. In addition, the NJDCA has recognized that individuals who have compromised lung function due to COVID-19 may be at higher risk of opioid overdose, as chronic respiratory disease has been reported to increase the risk of fatal overdose in those who use opioids therapeutically. The NJ Board of Medical Examiners (NJBME) also proposed a rule on April 6, 2020, which would require practitioners to prescribe Naloxone under similar circumstances beyond the COVID-19 PHE.

Who must follow the Administrative Order?

The order applies to the following licensees:

- Physicians
- Podiatrists
- Physician Assistants
- Certified Nurse Midwives
- Dentists
- Advanced Practice Nurses

When must Naloxone be prescribed?

Providers are required to co-prescribe Naloxone to patients when continuously prescribing controlled dangerous substances (CDS) for the management of chronic pain under the following conditions:

1. If the patient has one or more prescriptions totaling 90 morphine milligram equivalents (MME) or more per day; or
2. If the patient is concurrently obtaining an opioid and a benzodiazepine.

It is believed that the AO and the proposed NJBME rule will increase the availability of naloxone and reduce the risk of overdose deaths during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. NJ opioid deaths continue to be an issue. In 2019, there were 3,012 drug overdose deaths in the state, some of which may have been preventable with Naloxone administration. Co-prescribing Naloxone is broadly supported by national public health authorities, and mandatory co-prescribing can facilitate broader awareness of Naloxone among at-risk patients.

For NJBME guidance and the full text of the AO, please click [here](#).

As always, Conventus members can contact the Practice Resource Department at (877) 444-0484 ext.7466 for any questions or further guidance. Our experts would be happy to assist you.

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