

PQA1: Use of Opioids from Multiple Providers or at High Dosage in Persons without Cancer

Description of the measure

Patients with two or more prescriptions for opioids, for which the sum of days supply is ≥ 15 , are monitored to reduce risk of overdose. Those identified are 18 years and older without cancer that receive prescriptions for opioids either:

- With a daily dosage of ≥ 90 mg morphine equivalent dose (MED) for 90 consecutive days or longer,
- From four or more prescribers and four or more pharmacies, or
- A combination of criteria one and two

Exclusions

During year prior to measurement year

- Chronic myeloid leukemia
- Multiple myeloma, other neoplastic disorders
- Breast, lung and prostate cancer
- Other cancers and tumors

During measurement year

- Hospice
- Chronic myeloid leukemia
- Multiple myeloma, other neoplastic disorders
- Secondary cancers of bone, lung, brain and other specified sites
- Liver, lung, kidney, breast and other cancers and tumors

Tips for best practice

- Inform patients that the medication is meant to help manage their pain but not completely eliminate it
- Consider non-pharmacological treatment (e.g. acupuncture, physical therapy, etc.)

How to calculate daily opioid use

- Determine the total daily amount of each opioid the patient takes
- Convert each to its MED—multiply the dose for each opioid by the conversion factor²

Opioid (mg/day except where noted)	Conversion factor
Codeine	0.15
Fentanyl transdermal (mcg/hr.)	7.2
Hydrocodone	1.0
Hydromorphone	4.0
Methadone	3.0
Morphine	1.0
Oxycodone	1.5
Oxymorphone	3.0

¹ Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA, Inc.) is a consensus-based, multi-stakeholder membership organization committed to improving health care quality and patient safety with a focus on the appropriate use of medications.

² These dose conversions are estimated and cannot account for all individual differences in genetics and pharmacokinetics.