

**STATE OF MICHIGAN  
STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES  
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**

P.O. Box 30763, Lansing, MI 48909  
(877) 833-0870; Fax: (517) 334-9505

IN THE MATTER OF:

████████████████████

Appellant

\_\_\_\_\_ /

Docket No. 2011-23905 PHR  
Case No. 64372623

**DECISION AND ORDER**

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and 42 CFR 431.200 *et seq.*, upon the Appellant's request for a hearing.

After due notice, a hearing was held on ██████████. The Appellant appeared without representation. Her witness was ██████████. ██████████ represented the Department. She had no witnesses.

**ISSUE**

Did the Department properly deny Appellant's request for prior authorization (PA) of Suboxone?

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the competent, material and substantial evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

1. The Appellant is ██████████ Medicaid beneficiary. (Appellant's Exhibit #1)
2. The Appellant is afflicted with opioid dependence. (Department's Exhibit A, p. 1)
3. On ██████████, the Appellant's physician, a family practitioner, submitted a PA for continuation therapy of Suboxone to treat the Appellant who he diagnosed as suffering from "opioid dependence." (Department's Exhibit A, p. 1)
4. The Appellant had been on Suboxone therapy for ██████████. There was no evidence that tapering had begun. (Department's Exhibit A, p. 1)

5. Owing to contractual requirements between ██████ and the Michigan Department of Community Health the request for continued Suboxone therapy was reviewed for clinical compliance by MSA physician, ██████ – who denied the request for lack of information consistent with authorization criteria for treatment of opioid dependence, including no evidence of tapering. (Department’s Exhibit A, p. 13)
6. The Appellant and the prescriber were notified of the denial. (Department’s Exhibit A, pp. 14, 15).
7. The Appellant was notified in writing of her further appeal rights via adequate action/denial of service on ██████. (Department’s Exhibit A, p. 15)
8. The instant request for hearing was received by the State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (SOAHR) on ██████. (Appellant’s Exhibit #1)

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The Medical Assistance Program is established pursuant to Title XIX of the Social Security Act and is implemented by Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). It is administered in accordance with state statute, the Social Welfare Act, the Administrative Code, and the State Plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act Medical Assistance Program.

Social Security Act § 1927(d), [42 USC 1396r-8(d)]

#### LIMITATIONS ON COVERAGE OF DRUGS --

##### (1) PERMISSIBLE RESTRICTIONS –

- (A) A state may subject to prior authorization any covered outpatient drug. Any such prior authorization program shall comply with the requirements of paragraph (5).

A state may exclude or otherwise restrict coverage of a covered outpatient drug if –

- (i) the prescribed use is not for a medically accepted indication (as defined in subsection (k)(6);
- (ii) the drug is contained in the list referred to in paragraph (2);
- (iii) the drug is subject to such restriction pursuant to an agreement between a manufacturer and a State authorized by the

- Secretary under subsection (a)(1) or in effect pursuant to subsection (a)(4); or
- (iv) the State has excluded coverage of the drug from its formulary in accordance with paragraph 4.

(4) REQUIREMENTS FOR FORMULARIES - A State may establish a formulary if the formulary meets the following requirements:

- (A) The formulary is developed by a committee consisting of physicians, pharmacists, and other appropriate individuals appointed by the Governor of the State (or, at the option of the State, the State's drug use review board established under subsection (g)(3)).
- (B) Except as provided in subparagraph (C), the formulary includes the covered outpatient drugs of any manufacturer, which has entered into and complies with an agreement under subsection (a) (other than any drug excluded from coverage or otherwise restricted under paragraph (2)).
- (C) A covered outpatient drug may be excluded with respect to the treatment of a specific disease or condition for an identified population (if any) only if, based on the drug's labeling (or, in the case of a drug the prescribed use of which is not approved under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act but is a medically accepted indication, based on information from appropriate compendia described in subsection (k)(6)), the excluded drug does not have a significant, clinically meaningful therapeutic advantage in terms of safety, effectiveness, or clinical outcome of such treatment for such population over other drugs included in the formulary and there is a written explanation (available to the public) of the basis for the exclusion.
- (D) The state plan permits coverage of a drug excluded from the formulary (other than any drug excluded from coverage or otherwise restricted under paragraph (2)) pursuant to a prior authorization program that is consistent with paragraph (5),
- (E) The formulary meets such other requirements as the Secretary may impose in order to achieve program savings consistent with protecting the health of program beneficiaries.

A prior authorization program established by a State under paragraph (5) is not a formulary subject to the requirements of this paragraph.

(5) REQUIREMENTS OF PRIOR AUTHORIZATION PROGRAMS. — A State plan under this title may require, as a condition of coverage or payment for a covered outpatient drug for which Federal financial participation is available in accordance with this section, with respect to drugs dispensed on or after July 1, 1991, the approval of the drug before its dispensing for any medically accepted indication (as defined in subsection (k)(6)) only if the system providing for such approval –

- (A) Provides response by telephone or other telecommunication device within 24 hours of a request for prior authorization; and
- (B) Except with respect to the drugs referred to in paragraph (2) provides for the dispensing of at least 72-hour supply of a covered outpatient prescription drug in an emergency situation (as defined by the Secretary).

(6) OTHER PERMISSIBLE RESTRICTIONS – A State may impose limitations, with respect to all such drugs in a therapeutic class, on the minimum or maximum quantities per prescription or on the number of refills, if such limitations are necessary to discourage waste, and may address instances or fraud or abuse by individuals in any manner authorized under this Act.

Furthermore, the Medicaid Provider Manual (MPM) sets forth significant criteria for documentation of purported off-label uses and prior authorization requests:

### **DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

For all requests for PA, the following documentation is required:

- Pharmacy name and phone number;
- Beneficiary diagnosis and medical reason(s) why another covered drug cannot be used;
- Drug name, strength, and form;
- Other pharmaceutical products prescribed;
- Results of therapeutic alternative medications tried; and
- MedWatch Form or other clinical information may be required.

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### **PRIOR AUTHORIZATION DENIALS**

PA denials are conveyed to the requester. PA is denied if:

- The medical necessity is not established.
- Alternative medications are not ruled out.
- Evidence-based research and compendia do not support it.

██████████  
**Docket No. 2011-23905 PHR**  
**Decision and Order**

- It is contraindicated, inappropriate standard of care.
- It does not fall within MDCH clinical review criteria.
- Documentation required was not provided.

(Emphasis supplied)

MPM, Pharmacy §§8.4, 8.6, pages 15 and 16, April 1, 2011.<sup>1</sup>

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The Department witness, ██████████, testified that while the requested drug was designed to help treat addiction – that approvals beyond 6-months require another prior authorization for a total of 12-consecutive month’s usage. She added that extenuating circumstances for longer duration of Suboxone treatment are permissible with adequate documentation.

The Department’s evidence clearly showed Suboxone is not endorsed by the MDCH for chronic, maintenance or lifetime use. See Testimony of ██████████

The Appellant testified that she was unable to get to the doctor during “the blizzard” and took OTC pain medications, Xanax and Vicodin for an unrelated leg and back injury. She said she passed blood as a result of consuming these medications – and then tested “Negative”<sup>2</sup> [sic] at the doctor’s office. Her witness supported her testimony.

She said she was never told about the tapering requirement. She requested another six months of Suboxone therapy to effectuate her taper.

On review, based on the clinical judgment of the state reviewing physician and the credible testimony of Department witness ██████████ I find that the Appellant has failed to preponderate her burden of proof. The necessary information required for review concerned initial approval data, counseling compliance, compliance with the prescribing physician, plan for tapering, documentation that the patient [Appellant] is not using illicit drugs and a screen print of paid claims through POS history. The information provided to ██████████ was found by him to be inconsistent with the criteria for the treatment of opioid dependence. See Department’s Exhibit A, at page 1 and 13.

The Department’s decision to deny PA, based on the information submitted by ██████████ and today’s record was sufficient to justify denial of PA for Suboxone.

**DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the Department properly denied the Appellant’s request for PA of continued Suboxone therapy.

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<sup>1</sup> This edition of the MPM is identical to the version in place at the time of the Appellant’s appeal.

<sup>2</sup> The evidence showed she tested positive – this was likely a simple misstatement by the Appellant.

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Docket No. 2011-23905 PHR  
Decision and Order

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED** that:

The Department's decision is AFFIRMED.

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Dale Malewska  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Olga Dazzo, Director  
Michigan Department of Community Health

cc: [REDACTED]

Date Mailed: 4/19/2011

**\*\*\* NOTICE \*\*\***

The State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules may order a rehearing on either its own motion or at the request of a party within 30 days of the mailing date of this Decision and Order. The State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules will not order a rehearing on the Department's motion where the final decision or rehearing cannot be implemented within 90 days of the filing of the original request. The Appellant may appeal the Decision and Order to Circuit Court within 30 days of the receipt of the Decision and Order or, if a timely request for rehearing was made, within 30 days of the receipt of the rehearing decision.