



# Treating Pain without Opioids



Health Net\* encourages providers and hospitals to become familiar with nonopioid medication options and nonpharmacologic therapies for patients with chronic pain.

## ➔ Nonopioid Medication Options

Opioid medications are not the preferred treatment for chronic non-cancer pain but may be considered for select patients. Consider opioid therapy only if expected benefits for both pain and function are anticipated to outweigh risks to the patient and other alternative therapies have not provided sufficient pain relief. If opioids are used, combine them with nonopioid medication options and nonpharmacologic therapies, as appropriate.

For more information, please refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6501e1.htm?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fmmwr%2Fvolumes%2F65%2Frr%2Frr6501e1er.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/rr6501e1.htm?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fmmwr%2Fvolumes%2F65%2Frr%2Frr6501e1er.htm).

## ➔ Nonpharmacologic Therapies

Studies suggest the following modalities can provide safe and effective alternatives for treating certain types of chronic pain. **Note:** These modalities apply to chronic non-cancer pain and do not necessarily apply to end-of-life, cancer and sickle cell pain. Providers are responsible for verifying benefits, eligibility and cost shares each time an enrollee is scheduled to receive services.

1. Physical therapy (PT), osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT).
2. Exercise therapy and stretching.
3. Heat or cold therapy.
4. Relaxation or distraction.
5. Acupuncture and acupressure.
6. Chiropractic services.
7. Mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques.
8. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and other behavioral health therapies.

## Provider and Enrollee Resources

### *myStrength*

myStrength's guided program offers 24/7 access to clinically proven resources to address the opioid epidemic. myStrength is a private, no-cost online resource that provides self-management tools designed to help patients improve their mental and physical health.



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These tools can help patients manage pain and live an active life. The program provides low-risk and effective ways to help manage most types of chronic pain. Enrollees can:

- Get information about pain control options beyond medication.
- Improve their relationship with their doctor and increase their sense of control.
- Focus on the goals of pain treatment and wellness.
- Learn how to be mindful, stay active and think positively.



Consider referring enrollees to myStrength when they present with or screen positive on an assessment for depression, anxiety, stress, substance use, pain management, or a comorbid medical condition that would benefit from mental health self-care resources.

Accessing myStrength: Enrollees can access myStrength online at [www.mystrength.com/hnwell](http://www.mystrength.com/hnwell).

#### **Nurse advice line**

The nurse advice line is a service that offers no-cost health coaching and nurse advice over the phone. Enrollees can talk to a nurse about health problems and treatment choices 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



#### *Accessing the nurse advice line*

To access the nurse advice line, enrollees should call the telephone number shown on the back of their identification (ID) card.

#### *References:*

“Cognitive and Mind-Body Therapies for Chronic Low Back and Neck Pain: Effectiveness and Value.” November 6, 2017. <https://icer-review.org/material/back-and-neck-pain-final-report/>.

“Noninvasive Treatments for Acute, Subacute, and Chronic Low Back Pain: A Clinical Practice Guideline from the American College of Physicians.” April 4, 2017.

<http://annals.org/aim/article/2603228/noninvasive-treatmentsacute-subacute-chronic-low-backpainclinical-practice>.