



## **South Country Health Alliance Opiate Case Management Program**

### **Initiative Story**

I have worked as the Restricted Recipient Case Manager for South Country for nine years. In that time, a member on my caseload has died from an opiate overdose or health complications related to opiate abuse at a rate of about **one member every other year**. When our Director of Health Services mentioned creating a preventive initiative, I was all onboard.

### **Program Intent**

We track members who are new to opiates and contact them after they receive two prescriptions for, at least, seven total days of treatment. We assess their medical status, offer support and referral to resources and provide education on safe storage, safe disposal, and pain management alternatives. We provide follow-up contact after subsequent opiate fills.

### **Implementation**

Our IT department created a program to identify the target population. We developed assessment questions, educational materials and offer a free disposal packet to members. The development of this program started prior to a Performance Improvement Project (PIP) created by the State of Minnesota which has all Medicaid health plans developing interventions to address the opiate epidemic.

The goal of the Performance Improvement Project (PIP) is for each health plan to meet a target reduction in new chronic opiate users. Several Medicaid health plans collaborated to create a Provider Toolkit, to conduct statewide trainings and to develop materials for providers and members around opiate use.

### **Results**

South Country processes from 70 to 100 opiate prescriptions daily. We are aware of the impact the change in provider prescribing practices has already had on our members. The program started in March, and we have followed up with almost 500 members. Of those who were reached by telephone, only seven members have continued opiates past 90 days.

### **Lessons Learned**

- To connect with members, which can be challenging by phone, a very important key is to first convey concern, offer support and then discuss safe utilization of opiates.
- The first two weeks following a surgery or accident can set the stage for healing so connecting with patients early is so critical.
- These small gestures can make a significant difference for recovery.

### **Contact Information**

Ruth Boubin, MA: Opiate Case Management Program Case Manager at South Country Health Alliance  
Phone: 507-431-6370 Email: [Rboubin@mnscha.org](mailto:Rboubin@mnscha.org)