



## DRUG TRENDS

### EVALUATING OPIOIDS

In part three of our series we'll look at opioids, which continue to decrease in proportion to overall scripts and costs, with favorable trends in MED, duration of use, and access to guideline-supported measures including MAT and overdose rescue medications.

### 2018 opioid prescription utilization and cost trends\*

#### Opioid script volume

22.0%



Down  
2.0% pts.  
from  
2017

#### Opioid cost

20.7%



Down  
2.7% pts.  
from  
2017

While opioids continue to decline as a percentage of total script volume and costs, it remains essential to promote evidence-based risk management strategies.

\*The inclusion of out-of-network specialty HCPCS in the total script count and costs have adjusted the percentage of opioids previously reported in Drug Trends Part 2

### 2018 aggregate opioid trends

Cost per  
opioid script  
fell by  
nearly 2%

-16.5%



Decrease  
in scripts  
per claim

-18.1%



Decrease  
in cost  
per claim

The number  
of injured  
workers using  
opioids has continued  
to decline for 5  
consecutive  
years

21.9% pts.  
decline  
from 2013  
to 2018

Down  
4.3% pts.  
in  
2018

29.4%  
of injured  
workers use opioids



# 2018 Morphine Equivalent Dose (MED) trends



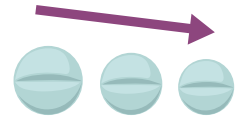
**7.0% pts**

Opioid claims with long-term, high MED\*

Down 0.4% pts. from 2017

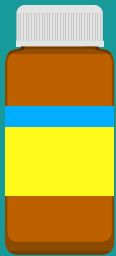
**2018**  
7.8% reduction in MED per script

First Script has continuously reduced MED over the last 8 years



\*Receiving consistent daily MED of at least 90 milligrams for 90 days or more.

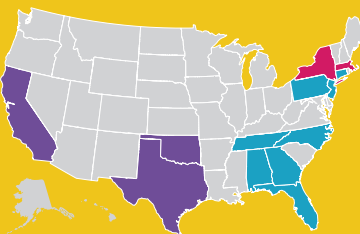
# High MED population results



**-23.2%**



Decrease in opioid scripts with high MED, 2015-2018\*



Over the last 3 years, the top 20 states have experienced significant decreases in high MED\*

**20-30%**  
NC, FL, AL, GA, TN, PA, CT, & NJ

**30-40%**  
MD & NY

**40-50%**  
TX, CA, & OK

**2017**  
17.9%

**2018**  
15.9%

High MED prescriptions have tapered off across all claim ages declining by 2% pts., the most significant decrease in the last 4 years

\* Scripts with an average daily MED of at least 90 milligrams.

# 2018 Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and naloxone



Buprenorphine and methadone scripts (commonly prescribed to treat opioid use disorder) increased 5.4% in 2018\*

MAT utilization and cost remain relatively low

Less than 4 out of 1,000 scripts

About \$4 out of every \$1,000



1.8% of opioid claims with MED > 50 received naloxone\*\* almost doubling the number from 2017

\*As a percentage of opioid scripts

\*\*Opioid overdose reversal agent

## Methodology

Aggregate trends were based upon First Script clients where both in-network (retail/mail order and extended networks) and out-of-network bill review prescriptions were available for analysis. Including this client base allows for the most accurate representation of the overall trend experience.

Morphine Equivalent Dosing (MED) statistics were based entirely on retail and mail order transactions through First Script where consistent day supply values were available.

## About First Script

First Script is the Pharmacy Benefit and Drug Utilization Management Program offered as part of the Coventry suite of products. The role of a work comp PBM has evolved in response to new dispensing practices, medications, regulations, and overall health care reform. This shift has moved from management of price alone to a greater focus on utilization controls and an increasing demand for better outcomes and improvements in total cost. First Script considers pharmacy transactions from all available dispensing and billing sources through comprehensive data integration that allows for the application of price and utilization pharmacy management tools. Our Clinical Intervention Model impacts overall cost and outcomes through program integration and collaboration with providers.

## About Coventry

Coventry offers workers' compensation, auto, and disability care-management and cost-containment solutions for employers, insurance carriers, and third-party administrators. With roots in both clinical and network services, Coventry leverages more than 35 years of industry experience, knowledge, and data analytics. As a part of the specialty division of Aetna our mission is returning people to work, to play, and to life. And our care-management and cost-containment solutions do just that. Our networks, clinical solutions, specialty programs, and business tools will help you focus on total outcomes.

## Acronyms

HCPCS: Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System

MED: Morphine Equivalent Dose

MAT: Medication-Assisted Treatment

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