



April 7, 2026

The Honorable Mehmet Oz, *MD*
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Re: Improving Outcomes and Reducing Opioid Exposure By Ensuring Access to Non-Opioid Medicines in Part D

Dear Administrator Oz,

We, the undersigned, write to encourage the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to use its existing authorities to ensure that Medicare Part D plans prioritize and ensure meaningful access to all FDA-approved, evidence-based, non-opioid medicines indicated for acute pain, including newly approved and first-in-class therapies.

America's seniors continue to receive opioids for the management of acute pain, even as new non-opioid therapies are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and become available for clinical use. In particular, recent FDA approvals have expanded the availability of innovative, non-opioid medicines for moderate-to-severe acute pain, including therapies with novel mechanisms of action. These innovations can help clinicians manage acute pain effectively while reducing reliance on opioids—provided that plans make timely, predictable coverage decisions and avoid barriers that functionally delay access.

Expanding access to non-opioid options is critical to improving health outcomes for seniors. Opioid utilization is associated with increased risks of falls, fractures, cognitive impairment, dependence, and hospitalization—outcomes that are especially dangerous and costly for older Americans. They also lead to poorer overall health outcomes.

By contrast, non-opioid medicines that effectively manage acute pain can support faster recovery, improved function, and better quality of life.

Reducing unnecessary opioid prescribing also protects families and households beyond the beneficiary. Excess opioids prescribed to seniors are a known source of community diversion, accidental ingestion, and misuse by family members, caregivers, and others.

Policies that ensure access to non-opioid therapies where clinically appropriate can help prevent these downstream harms and strengthen community health.

There is also a clear fiscal rationale for action. Opioid-related adverse events drive avoidable spending across Medicare, including emergency department visits, inpatient admissions, post-acute care, and long-term disability. When beneficiaries experience poor outcomes associated with opioid use, taxpayers ultimately bear the cost.

Facilitating access to effective non-opioid medicines has the potential to reduce these downstream expenditures while improving care.

We therefore urge CMS to communicate to Part D plan sponsors about the clinical importance of FDA-approved, clinically appropriate non-opioid acute pain treatment options and encourage appropriate formulary coverage ensuring beneficiary access to such approaches.

These steps would build on ongoing efforts to address the opioid crisis while respecting clinician judgment and patient choice. Seniors deserve access to the full range of FDA-approved treatment options so that pain can be managed safely, effectively, and responsibly.

Thank you for your leadership and attention to this important issue. We look forward to continued collaboration to improve care for Medicare beneficiaries and strengthen the integrity of the program.

Sincerely,

Voices for Non-Opioid Choices

60 Plus Association

A Voice In the Wilderness Empowerment Center

Achieve Recovery Homes

Ambulatory Surgery Center Association

American Addiction Recovery Association

American Association of Nurse Practitioners

American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons

American Association of Senior Citizens

American Freedom Consulting LLC

American Podiatric Medical Association

American Soldier Network

Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation

ARMOUR Families

Asheville Equine Therapy

Better Together CT

Blue Water Recovery and Outreach Center

Braach Shepherds 4 Veterans

Center of Addiction & Faith

CHAPS Equine Assisted Services

Chatham Drug Free

Coalition for Behavioral Health

Confidential Recovery

Country Doc Walk-in & Wellness

Country Wellness

Crux Wilderness Therapy

Danny's Ride

Deer Run Ranch Equine Connection

Dove House Advocacy Services

El Rancho de la Vida

Elderly Advocates

Endeavour Therapeutic Horsemanship

Equilibrium Wellness Center

Erase PTSD Now

Facing Fentanyl
Gateway Meadows Equine Services
Generation O, The National Organization for Opioid-Exposed Children
Guardian Garage
Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center
Healing on the Fly
Heroes Helping Heroes 4 Life
Heroes' Movement
Herren Project
Ho'ola Veteran Services
HOPE Haven
Hope Lives-Viva La Esperanza
Hope Street
HVAF of Indiana, Inc.
InStep, Inc.
Iron Tribe Network
Jake's Reach, Inc
Journey House Foundation
Latino Recovery Advocacy
Life of Laughter
LITE Recovery
Marissa's Voice
MATFORCE (Mobilizing Action Together for Community Empowerment)
Medicare Rights Center
Mental Health America
Michigan Women Veterans Empowerment
Monkey Brain Art Project
Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center
NAMI Montgomery County
National Coalition For Patriots
National Council on Aging
National Transitions of Care Coalition
New Earth Recovery
New Jerusalem Missions
New U Recovery Inc.
New U Recovery Ranch Business Consulting LLC
Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium (WellLink Health Alliance)
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA)
Operation Charlie Bravo
Operation First Response
Opioid Solutions Legacy
Optimum Health and Wellness Physical Therapy, Inc.
Overdose Lifeline, Inc.
Parrott Creek Child & Family Services
Prevention Action Alliance
Prevention Alliance of TN

Project Headspace and Timing
Project Restore Hope
PTSD Awareness Summit
Quest 4 Recovery Network
Rea of Hope, Inc.
REAL LIFE Program
Recovery Cafe Skagit
Recovery Mobile Clinic
Renters for Recovery
RetireSafe
SACLaz (Substance Awareness Coalition Leaders of Arizona)
Safe Haven Recovery Engagement Center
Setbacks to Comeback
Shatterproof
SHE RECOVERS Foundation
Society for Opioid Free Anesthesia
Team Sharing, Inc.
The Addict's Parents (TAP) United
The Battle Within
The Kennedy Forum
The MOSAIC Foundation
The Veteran Mentor Project, Inc.
The Warren Coalition
Trauma and Resiliency Resources
Twelfth Step Ministry, Inc.
Vermont Association of Mental Health and Addiction Recovery
Veterans Network Association
Veterans Outreach Center
VetParks A.T.V
Voices for Awareness
Voices of Hope Maryland
West Warwick Prevention Coalition
Will Bright Foundation
Wisconsin Veterans Network
Wyoming Valley Drug and Alcohol Services
Young People in Recovery