

**Second Regular Session
Seventy-fifth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

REVISED

*This Version Includes All Amendments Adopted
on Second Reading in the Second House*

LLS NO. 26-0027.01 Shelby Ross x4510

SENATE BILL 26-006

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Amabile and Kirkmeyer, Bright, Catlin, Coleman, Cutter, Frizell, Pelton B., Wallace

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Brown and Taggart,

Senate Committees

Health & Human Services
Appropriations

House Committees

Health & Human Services
Appropriations

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING PARITY FOR THE USE OF NON-OPIOID PAIN MANAGEMENT**
102 **DRUGS, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN**
103 **APPROPRIATION.**

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill requires a health insurance carrier that provides prescription drug benefits to require that:

- The utilization review requirements, including prior authorization and step therapy, for a non-opioid drug prescribed and approved by the federal food and drug

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

HOUSE
Amended 2nd Reading
May 5, 2026

SENATE
3rd Reading Unamended
April 20, 2026

SENATE
Amended 2nd Reading
April 17, 2026

administration (FDA) for the treatment or management of chronic or acute pain (non-opioid pain management drug) are no more restrictive than the least restrictive utilization review requirements for opioid drugs prescribed for the treatment or management of chronic or acute pain;

- There is at least one clinically appropriate non-opioid prescription drug available as an alternative for each opioid prescription drug; and
- The cost-sharing, copayment, or deductible for a non-opioid pain management drug is not greater than the cost-sharing, copayment, or deductible for an opioid drug prescribed for the treatment or management of chronic or acute pain.

The bill requires the department of health care policy and financing to ensure that the utilization review requirements, including prior authorization or step therapy, for a non-opioid prescription drug prescribed and approved by the FDA for the treatment or management of chronic or acute pain are no more restrictive than the least restrictive utilization requirements for opioid drugs prescribed for the treatment or management of chronic or acute pain.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 10-16-145.5, **add**
3 (2.5) as follows:

4 **10-16-145.5. Step therapy - prior authorization - prohibited -**
5 **stage four advanced metastatic cancer - non-opioid pain management**
6 **drug - definitions.**

7 (2.5) (a) NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION 10-16-145, A CARRIER THAT
8 PROVIDES PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFITS SHALL REQUIRE THAT:

9 (1) THE UTILIZATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING PRIOR
10 AUTHORIZATION AND STEP THERAPY, FOR A NON-OPIOID DRUG PRESCRIBED
11 AND APPROVED BY THE FDA FOR THE TREATMENT OR MANAGEMENT OF
12 CHRONIC OR ACUTE PAIN ARE NO MORE RESTRICTIVE THAN THE LEAST
13 RESTRICTIVE UTILIZATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS FOR OPIOID DRUGS
14 PRESCRIBED FOR THE TREATMENT OR MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC OR

1 ACUTE PAIN;

2 (II) THERE IS AT LEAST ONE NON-OPIOID PRESCRIPTION DRUG
3 AVAILABLE AS A CLINICALLY APPROPRIATE ALTERNATIVE FOR AN OPIOID
4 PRESCRIPTION DRUG; AND

5 (III) THE COST-SHARING, COPAYMENT, OR DEDUCTIBLE FOR A
6 NON-OPIOID DRUG PRESCRIBED FOR THE TREATMENT OR MANAGEMENT OF
7 CHRONIC OR ACUTE PAIN IS NO GREATER THAN THE COST-SHARING,
8 COPAYMENT, OR DEDUCTIBLE FOR AN OPIOID DRUG PRESCRIBED FOR THE
9 TREATMENT OR MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC OR ACUTE PAIN.

10 (b) THIS SUBSECTION (2.5) DOES NOT APPLY TO A GROUP BENEFIT
11 PLAN ISSUED PURSUANT TO THE "STATE EMPLOYEE GROUP BENEFITS
12 ACT", PART 6 OF ARTICLE 50 OF TITLE 24.

13 **SECTION 2. Appropriation.** For the 2026-27 state fiscal year,
14 \$15,415 is appropriated to the department of regulatory agencies for use
15 by the division of insurance. This appropriation is from the division of
16 insurance cash fund created in section 10-1-103 (3)(a)(I), C.R.S., and is
17 based on an assumption that the division will require an additional 0.2
18 FTE. To implement this act, the division may use this appropriation for
19 personal services.

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21 **SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act
22 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
23 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August
24 12, 2026, if adjournment sine die is on May 13, 2026); except that, if a
25 referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the
26 state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act
27 within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect

1 unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
2 November 2026 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
3 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.