



**TO: Pharmacy Providers, Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Clinics, Long Term Care Providers, and Hospitals**  
**RE: Elimination of Belbuca and Butrans from Long-Acting Sustained Release Opioid Prior Authorization**

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**Effective February 1, 2019, buprenorphine buccal film (Belbuca) and buprenorphine transdermal patch (Butrans) will no longer require prior authorization (PA).**

On December 1, 2016, the Department of Social Services (DSS) implemented Prior Authorization (PA) for all long acting sustained release opioid medications for HUSKY A, HUSKY B, HUSKY C, HUSKY D, Family Planning and Tuberculosis (limited coverage group) clients.

Belbuca and Butrans are considered safe and effective alternatives to other long acting opioids for the treatment of chronic pain. Buprenorphine in either form is less addictive, poses a much lower overdose risk, and has significantly fewer side effects as compared to other long acting opioids. For these reasons, DSS has decided to no longer require PA for Belbuca or Butrans.

It is important to note that there are still risks of addiction, abuse, and misuse of Buprenorphine even at recommended doses. Therefore, practitioners should reserve Belbuca and Butrans for use in patients where alternative treatment options (e.g. non-opioid analgesics or immediate release opioids) have proven ineffective, not tolerated, or would be otherwise inadequate to provide insufficient management of pain.

As a reminder, effective 7/1/2016, Connecticut General Statutes Section 20-14o prohibits a prescribing provider from issuing a prescription for an opioid drug for more than a seven day supply (five days for minors) with limited exceptions. All practitioners who prescribe greater than a seventy-two hour supply of any controlled substance (Schedule II-V) are required to review the patient's records in the Connecticut Prescription Monitoring and Reporting System (CPMRS) at <https://connecticut.pmpaware.net>. The full requirements for such review are discussed in Provider Bulletin PB 16-36, released on June 26, 2016.