Blue Cross
Blue Shield
of Michigan

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As part of BCBSM's efforts to maintain patient safety, you are receiving this fax because your name has been associated with at least ONE of the prescriptions

There has been a dramatic increase in deaths from prescription opioids as documented by numerous studies including hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine methadone and fentanyl. These deaths have dramatically overtaken deaths due to heroin use It is also apparent that part of the risk of overdose death involves combining opioids with sedatives such as alprazolam (Xanax®), diazepam (Valium®), and/or clonazepam (Klonopin®) The combination of scheduled opioids and sedatives, as well as alcohol, increases the risk of death by acting additively or synergistically on respiratory centers in the brain" According to the CDC benzodiazepines are involved in about 30% of overdose deaths[iii].

After several years of concern by addiction professionals, the DEA has recently reclassified the "muscle relaxant" carisoprodol (Soma®) as a scheduled drug. This is due to the abuse and overdoses that have occurred with this medication, widely misused because of its (former) non-controlled status. With the increasing awareness of Soma® as a drug of abuse, there has been a combination recognized by the medical community commonly known as the "Holy Trinity", consisting typically of an opioid analgesic, a benzodiazepine, and Soma®. There is no legitimate medical indication for this combination of controlled substances. The most common reasons that patients give to prescribers when requesting this combination of medications are chronic pain and/or anxiety. The most common underlying reason however, is actually chemical abuse and dependence. If the diagnosis is opioid abuse or dependence, the continued use of sedatives (either carisoprodol or benzodiazepine) is contraindicated[iv], and the continued use of opioid analgesics is against DEA regulations. If the diagnosis is legitimately chronic pain, benzodiazepines are still contraindicated as they lead to a "downward spiral" of pain control and function[v], as well as the development of dementia

You can use the Michigan Automated Prescription System to review patients' Schedules 2-5 controlled substance prescription records You can access the MAPS website and register to submit requests online at

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