

Maine Medicaid rules reduce narcotic prescriptions

April 10 2014, by Blake Davis

Maine is leading the nation in efforts to stem the flow of narcotics, using unique Medicaid guidelines that cut back on prescriptions and cover alternative treatments instead.

Officials of the Medicaid program MaineCare say they reduced the number of patients receiving opioid painkillers by 17 percent in 2013 compared to 2012. Those with conditions such as cancer still received their medications.

MaineCare may also have influenced doctors to write fewer painkiller prescriptions covered by private insurers—but more [patients](#) and pills were recorded for Medicare, workers' compensation and those paying out of pocket.

Drug enforcement officials say the Medicaid guidelines—along with other state and national efforts—may unintentionally be contributing to a rise in heroin use by drying up the source of illegally sold [narcotics](#).

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