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*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
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JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.  
Secretary

JULIAN J. HARRIS, M.D.  
Medicaid Director

RE: Suboxone Film and Unintentional Pediatric Exposures

December 2012

Dear Prescriber:

Recent press releases by Reckitt Benckiser (the manufacturer of Suboxone sublingual tablets and film) and data published by the Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center in conjunction with RADARS System Poison Center program have documented a greater unintentional exposure risk of buprenorphine/naloxone tablets than with that of the film in children 0 to five years of age.<sup>1</sup> Data from October 1, 2009, to December 31, 2011, shows the unintentional exposure rates to be 0.68 cases/1,000 unique recipients for the tablets vs. 0.08 cases/1,000 unique recipients for film. Accordingly, we will be adjusting our approval criteria to provide access to the unit-dosed film formulation to those members prescribed Suboxone who live in households with children less than six years of age. A prior authorization request must be submitted stipulating this circumstance.

MassHealth is aware of Reckitt Benckiser's planned withdrawal of Suboxone tablets. Please be assured that MassHealth will continue to pay for available formulations of buprenorphine/naloxone for members who require treatment. MassHealth will issue additional advisories on this matter as necessary.

Further information on buprenorphine and buprenorphine/naloxone treatment, including applicable prior authorization requirements, is set forth in the MassHealth Drug List (see Table 36 and the related Evaluation Criteria). The MassHealth Drug List and other information can be found on the MassHealth Pharmacy website at [www.mass.gov/masshealth/pharmacy](http://www.mass.gov/masshealth/pharmacy).

We appreciate your continued support and dedication to providing care to MassHealth members.

Sincerely,

Paul L. Jeffrey, PharmD  
Pharmacy Director  
MassHealth

References:

1. Lavonas E, Severtson SG, Murrelle EL, Ruby J, Boucher-Barelson B, Dart RC. Unintentional Exposures to Buprenorphine/Naloxone Tablets and Film Among Children Less than Six Years Old: Initial Experience from the RADARS System Poison Center Program. Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse: 36<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference; November 1-3, 2012; Bethesda, Maryland. Book of Abstracts P. 17.