

FDA Advisory Board strengthens Black Box Warning on Popular Pain Medication A Service of the Cypress Care Clinical Service Department

Due to emerging concerns surrounding propoxyphene, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently convened to review and assess the clinical safety of propoxyphene-containing medications. Propoxyphene is an opioid analgesic frequently prescribed to injured workers for pain management. This class of medications includes a number of popular drugs, such as Darvon and Darvocet.

Recent data indicates that more effective drug therapies exist that do not have the side effects caused by drugs containing propoxyphene. Although the study's findings were not conclusive, the FDA's advisory panel recommended implementing a more detailed black box warning label until future studies produce more decisive results.

Cypress Care's clinical team closely monitors any pharmaceutical concern reported by the FDA that may impact customers. Because of its common use in workers' compensation, Cypress Care's clinical team along with its Pharmacy & Therapeutic Committee has carefully reviewed the panel's findings and recommends close monitoring of all propoxyphene prescriptions, but no changes to its formularies

Cypress Care has increased its vigilance in monitoring claims containing propoxyphene and will continue to monitor the FDA's stance on this matter. Should the FDA take more definitive action in the future, Cypress Care has established a plan to implement the following processes into their day-to-day operations:

- Inform clients should more clinically appropriate regimen be warranted and make recommendations on alternative therapies
- Establish a process for escalation to Prior Authorization status for claims containing propoxyphene
- Monitor physicians prescribing habits regarding medications containing propoxyphene

Cypress Care's clinical team is responsible for providing clinical oversight for its pharmacy programs and for optimizing drug utilization trends for each customer. Utilization management strategies developed and led by our internal clinical consultants help Cypress Care to enforce greater vigilance and equip clients with a suite of services that produce cost efficient management while protecting each claimant's health.