

Opioid Use Disorder in the age of Covid-19

Information derived from slide set presented on Friday, March 20th, 2020 by Dr. Robert Tanguay MD, FRCPC, CCSAM, CISAM @drrobbietee for the Alberta Addiction Education Sessions.

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First of all, be aware that exemptions for prescriptions of methadone have been relaxed to reduce the risk of patients not being able to get their medication:

Prescriptions



Health Canada Santé Canada

SUBSECTION 56(1) CLASS EXEMPTION FOR PATIENTS, PRACTITIONERS AND PHARMACISTS PRESCRIBING AND PROVIDING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES IN CANADA DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

- permit pharmacists to extend prescriptions;
- permit pharmacists to transfer prescriptions to other pharmacists;
- permit prescribers to issue verbal orders (i.e., over the phone) to extend or refill a prescription; and
- permit pharmacy employees to deliver prescriptions of controlled substances to patient's homes or other locations where they may be (i.e self isolating).

This exemption is effective immediately, but some provinces require an additional step before these exemptions are active.

Key point: Don't let patients run out!

- Talk about being careful with dose
- Talk about delivery for those needed shorted dispensing intervals for prescription medications
- Don't have patients come to Clinic unless ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY

Highly recommend the Use virtual care to see patients to reduce risk of spread to community and health care workers. Most provinces have made provision to pay physicians for virtual visits (video or telephone).

Specific recommendations for Opioid Agonist Therapy

Clinical Practice

- Suspend all UDS
- Delivery when possible
- No Daily Witnessed dosing of Bup/Nal
- No in office initiation of Bup/Nal - Home Induction
- Up to 60 days Bup/Nal Dispensing on a script
- Carries for Methadone on physician assessment of risk
- Consider discussing rotating to Bup/Nal for patients on methadone or iOAT

Key point: **Do not fire your patients!**

For patients on injectable OAT (hydromorphone and diacetylmorphine): consider offering a transition to the morphine equivalent of oral opioids and providing carries, as clinically appropriate, to reduce daily clinic visitation

For PWUD (and all patients):

Education is important

- All the usual education
- Increased Risk of OD
- Buddy up, BUT stay 2m away
- Continue to use SCS/OPS

Do not share supplies, such as cigarettes, joints, pipes, injecting equipment, containers for alcohol, utensils, and other supplies. If you have to share, wipe pipes with alcohol wipes or use new mouthpieces.

- Reduce close contact (e.g. shaking hands, hugging, kissing) and ensure condom use
- Wash your hands or use wipes before preparing, handling or using your drugs.
- Prepare your drugs yourself.

Cough or sneeze into your elbow or use tissues. Throw tissues away immediately and wash your hands thoroughly.

- Clean surfaces with soap and water, alcohol wipes, bleach or hydrogen peroxide before preparing drugs if possible
- Carry naloxone and have an overdose plan. Please use breathing masks available in the naloxone kits if responding to an overdose.

The full presentation can be viewed here, and includes presentations by Karin Classen on Social Isolation, SUD and Covid-19, plus 2 presentations on opioid deprescribing and chronic pain. <https://livestream.com/accounts/3923053/events/8457082/videos/203205689>

Another useful resource:

Yale Addiction Medicine has 2 documents about addiction and Covid-19, one for clinicians and one for patients. Detailed and comprehensive.

<https://medicine.yale.edu/intmed/genmed/addictionmedicine/>

Send comments or additional suggestions to Dr. Jenn Brasch at jbrasch@stjoes.ca

Online Resources of support for people with substance use disorders

12 Step Online Meetings

This is a directory of online Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in various formats, including email, chat room, audio/video, discussion forums, and telephone.

Alcoholics Anonymous - <http://aa-intergroup.org/directory.php>

Cocaine Anonymous - <https://www.ca-online.org/>

Narcotics Anonymous -

<https://www.na.org/meetingsearch/text-results.php?country=Web&state&city&zip&street&within=5&day=0&lang&orderby=distance>

AA Sober Living

Online recovery help for those in all stages of recovery, family, friends and loved ones including message boards, chats, blogs, and daily and weekly readings.

www.aasoberliving.com

SMART Recovery

This website includes message boards, chat rooms, online meetings, and an online library of recovery resources.

<https://www.smartrecovery.org/smart-recovery-toolbox/smart-recovery-online/>

In the Rooms

A free online recovery tool that offers 130 weekly online meetings for those recovering from addiction and related issues. They embrace multiple pathways to recovery, including all 12 Step, Non-12 Step, Wellness and Mental Health modalities.

<https://www.intherooms.com/home/>

The Daily Pledge

This is Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation's free online Community Social Site. It provides a home page to make a Daily Pledge to sobriety with healthy daily activities to help people see others "recover out loud."

The site also includes a Discussions forum, Chat, Online Meetings, Fun and Photo sections, private messaging with other members, and other interactive involvements. You need to sign-up to participate.

<https://thedailypledge.org/>

myRecovery

This is a free social networking community and resource center for those in alcohol and drug addiction recovery. Similar to other social networking community sites such as Facebook, myRecovery offers a full profile system with a real time "wall", the ability to

add photos and videos, and the option for people to display as much or as little information about themselves as they wish, including full anonymity. There is also a live public video chat as well as an open forum section where users can post on a number of topics. Members can also create their own groups. myRecovery has a resource section with recovery tools including a large repository of addiction-related videos and audio files, a comprehensive 12-step meetings search to help people find meetings in their area, a live online video meetings section, a recovery blog, latest news on addiction and an assessment section.

www.myrecovery.com

SoberRecovery

The message board in this directory of recovery resources covers a wide variety of categories: Newcomers, Ask the Experts, General Forums, Alcoholism (AA, Alanon, ACOA), Drug Addiction (NA, Nar-Anon), Family and Friends, Mental Health and much more.

www.soberrecovery.com/forum

CannabisRehab.org

This free online drug rehab group was originally set up just to help those trying to quit marijuana but they now welcome anyone struggling with drug addiction.

www.cannabisrehab.org

HAMS Harm Reduction Network

HAMS is a free of charge peer led support group for people who want to reduce the harm in their lives caused by alcohol or other substances. HAMS offers support via a chat room, an email group, and live meetings. HAMS supports every goal from safer use to reduced use to abstinence from alcohol. Their daily chat is schedule for 9 P.M. EST , 6 P.M. PST.

<https://www.hamsnetwork.org>