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**SAPC INFORMATION NOTICE 22-04**

January 25, 2022

**TO:** Los Angeles County Substance Use Disorder  
Contracted Treatment Network Providers

**FROM:** Gary Tsai, M.D., Division Director *AT*  
Substance Abuse Prevention and Control

**SUBJECT: MEDICATIONS FOR ADDICTION TREATMENT ACCESS IN THE  
SAPC TREATMENT NETWORK**

The Department of Public Health’s Division of Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC) is releasing this Information Notice to clarify requirements related to Medications for Addiction Treatment (MAT). This evidence-based treatment option is part of a comprehensive, biopsychosocial approach to the treatment of substance use disorders (SUD).

SAPC contracted treatment providers are required to establish and maintain active policies and procedures facilitating the provision of MAT either directly to their patients or via linkage with other providers (e.g., federally qualified health centers [FQHC], primary care providers) that offer MAT services. Contracted treatment providers that do not offer MAT directly must establish referral relationships with Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP) and/or non-OTP clinics with MAT prescribing clinicians for their patients. SAPC encourages formal arrangements such as memorandums of understanding (MOU) between agencies in order to optimize referral relationships and processes.

SAPC contracted providers, including Client Engagement and Navigation Services (CENS) staff, are required to discuss and inform patients about MAT as a treatment option for all patients being treated for an alcohol, opioid, and/or tobacco use disorder<sup>1</sup> so that they understand that MAT is an evidence-based treatment option for their condition. MAT is required to be offered as a concurrent treatment option for patients with these conditions

<sup>1</sup> Although tobacco use disorder (TUD) cannot be a primary diagnosis for Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) services, SAPC programs should treat TUD alongside DMC-ODS services as long as a non-tobacco SUD is the primary diagnosis for DMC-ODS services.

at all levels of care and settings across the specialty SUD system. The passive or active discouragement of the use of MAT is contrary to both SAPC policy and to the science of effective SUD treatment.

SAPC providers should identify if and where patients currently receive primary care, mental health care, and/or other medical services and obtain an authorization form signed by the patient or parent/guardian (when applicable) to facilitate coordination of MAT care with other prescribing clinicians involved in the patient’s care. MAT should be offered to patients of all ages where clinically appropriate, supported by the American Academy of Pediatric Policy Statement available here: <http://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article-lookup/doi/10.1542/peds.2016-1893>. The laws regarding parental consent and the provision of healthcare of minors are discussed here: <http://teenhealthlaw.org/consent>.

**Table 1: Different Types of Medications for Addiction Treatment**

Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)	Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)	Tobacco Use Disorder (TUD) <sup>1</sup>
Methadone <i>(only available via OTPs for the indication of OUD)</i>	Oral Naltrexone	Bupropion (Zyban or Wellbutrin)
Buprenorphine (Suboxone, Subutex, Zubsolv, Sublocade, etc)	Injectable Naltrexone (Vivitrol)	Varenicline (Chantix)
Injectable Naltrexone (Vivitrol)	Disulfiram (Antabuse)	Nicotine Replacement Therapy (patch, gum, lozenge, inhaler, and nasal spray)
Naloxone <sup>2</sup> (Narcan)	Acamprosate (Campral)	

<sup>1</sup> Tobacco use disorder (TUD) cannot be a primary diagnosis for Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) services, but SAPC programs should treat TUD alongside DMC-ODS services as long as a non-tobacco SUD is the primary diagnosis for DMC-ODS services. Given the high co-occurrence of TUD and other SUDs, tobacco use can be a topic for patient education groups, included as part of risk reduction groups and individual counseling services, and as part of a patient’s overall treatment for the primary substance use disorder.

<sup>2</sup> Naloxone should be prescribed and/or distributed to patients with opioid, stimulant, sedative and other use disorders where patients are at risk for opioid overdose.

The clinic and pharmacy pathways for access to MAT for patients receiving SUD treatment in SAPC’s specialty SUD system varies based on the patient’s financial eligibility, as follows:

**Process for Accessing MAT as a Medi-Cal Enrolled Beneficiary** (including individuals whose Medi-Cal benefits are active and being transferred from another county)

- SAPC non-OTP prescribing clinician writes a prescription for MAT. Patient goes to a community pharmacy that bills Medi-Cal to dispense the prescription. *SAPC recommends that the provider contact the community pharmacy to confirm that it has the prescribed MAT in stock.*

- SAPC providers who do not have an available prescribing clinician should consider these alternative pathways to establish MAT access for Medi-Cal beneficiaries:
  - A. SAPC non-OTP provider refers the patient to another clinic or service that prescribes MAT. Los Angeles County community clinics that prescribe MAT are listed here: <https://LosAngelesMAT.org>.

- OR -

- B. SAPC non-OTP provider refers the patient with an OUD to enroll in a SAPC-contracted OTP. SAPC-contracted OTPs are listed on the Service and Bed Availability Tool (SBAT) as listed here: <http://sapccis.ph.lacounty.gov/sbat>.

### **Process for Accessing MAT as a My Health LA (MHLA) Enrollee**

Uninsured patients who do not qualify for public insurance such as full-scope Medi-Cal can access MAT through the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services' (DHS) MHLA program. They must first be enrolled in MHLA and then can receive medications through MHLA-contracted pharmacies.

#### To Enroll a Patient in MHLA

Patients eligible for MHLA can call the MHLA Member Services line at 844-744-6452 to start MHLA enrollment, or patients can call or visit a MHLA community clinic directly. The eligible patient will need to complete MHLA enrollment either in-person or by phone through a MHLA community clinic, which are listed here: <http://dhs.lacounty.gov/mhla> (How to Find a Clinic).

#### MHLA Eligibility

- 26 years and older
- Uninsured and unable to qualify for public insurance
- Reside in Los Angeles County
- Low-income (currently defined as an annual income of less than 138% of the federal poverty level)

SAPC providers that believe that a patient is already enrolled in MHLA but need to confirm should email [myhealthla@dhs.lacounty.gov](mailto:myhealthla@dhs.lacounty.gov) or call MHLA's administrative office at 626-525-5789.

#### Prescribing MAT to MHLA Enrollees

- MHLA enrollees can be prescribed MAT by a SAPC providers' prescribing clinician even if the SAPC provider and clinician are not directly contracted with MHLA.
  1. Confirm that the MHLA's formulary covers the specific MAT prescription on the MHLA Drug Formulary available here: <http://dhs.lacounty.gov/my-health->

[la/pharmacy](#). MHLA covers naloxone as well as most type of MAT including: buprenorphine-naloxone, oral naltrexone, and bupropion.

**IMPORTANT:**

For injectable naltrexone (Vivitrol®), the SAPC provider must assist the patient with enrollment in the manufacturer's co-pay program (available via <http://od.vivitrol.com/co-pay-savings-program> for patients with OUD and <http://www.vivitrol.com/alcohol-dependence/co-pay-savings-program> for patients with AUD). If co-pay program application is denied, refer patient to their MHLA community clinic for follow up and provide the co-pay application denial letter/notice. The patient's assigned MHLA clinic will then need to complete and submit a MHLA Naltrexone (Vivitrol®) Prior Authorization (PA) Form, available via <http://dhs.lacounty.gov/my-health-la/pharmacy> (Prior Authorization Forms), to DHS Pharmacy Affairs (by email: [priorauth@dhs.lacounty.gov](mailto:priorauth@dhs.lacounty.gov) or by fax: 310-669-5609) for coverage consideration.

2. SAPC non-OTP providers' prescribing clinician writes MAT prescription for a MHLA enrollee.
  3. SAPC non-OTP provider refers the patient to a MHLA-contracted pharmacy which bills MHLA to dispense the prescription. Find a MHLA-contracted pharmacy here: <http://www.ventegra.com/MHLA>. *SAPC recommends that the provider contact the community pharmacy to confirm that it has the prescribed MAT in stock.*
- SAPC providers who do not have an available prescribing clinician should consider these alternative pathways to establish MAT access for MHLA enrollees:
    - A. SAPC provider refers the patient to a MHLA community clinic or service that prescribes MAT. MHLA clinics that prescribe MAT are listed here: <https://LosAngelesMAT.org>.
    - OR -
    - B. SAPC non-OTP provider refers the patient with an OUD to enroll in a SAPC-contracted OTP. SAPC-contracted OTPs are listed on the SBAT: <http://sapccis.ph.lacounty.gov/sbat>.

**Process for Accessing MAT as a Los Angeles County Department of Health Services Primary Care Patient Without Medi-Cal**

Los Angeles County residents who are low-income, who are uninsured, and who are unable to qualify for public insurance also can be assigned to DHS for primary care at a DHS clinic (instead of enrolling in MHLA and getting care at a MHLA community clinic). Uninsured patients without Medi-Cal who are already receiving DHS primary care should be referred to a DHS-operated hospital or clinic to receive a prescription for MAT that will also need to be filled via a DHS-operated pharmacy.

For more information about DHS and to locate a DHS-operated hospital or clinic, go here: <http://dhs.lacounty.gov/our-services> or the patient can call the DHS Access Center via 844-804-0055.

Prescribing MAT to an uninsured patient assigned to DHS for primary care

- SAPC non-OTP provider refers the patient to a DHS clinic or hospital that prescribes MAT. DHS primary care clinics that prescribe MAT are listed here: <https://LosAngelesMAT.org>.

- OR -

- SAPC non-OTP provider refers the patient with a prescription for MAT from a DHS prescribing clinician to a DHS-operated pharmacy which dispenses MAT. Find a DHS-operated pharmacy here: <http://dhs.lacounty.gov/our-services/pharmacy>.

- OR -

- SAPC non-OTP provider refers the patient with an OUD to enroll in a SAPC-contracted OTP. SAPC-contracted OTPs are listed on the SBAT: <http://sapccis.ph.lacounty.gov/sbat>.

For further questions related to MAT access within the SAPC Network of Care, contact SAPC's Medical Director, Brian Hurley M.D., via phone 626-299-3228 or email [bhurley@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:bhurley@ph.lacounty.gov).

GT:dd