

# NJ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services



## COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE EFFECTS ON OPIOID TREATMENT PROGRAMS

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# Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs)



- OTPs are essential public facilities that provide critical medication services to individuals with an Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)
- Many individuals present at an OTP daily to receive medication
- The treatment of opioid dependence with medications is governed by the Certification of Opioid Treatment Programs, 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 8.12
- This regulation created a system to accredit and certify opioid treatment programs (OTPs)
- OTP patients are required to receive counseling, which can include different forms of behavioral therapy

# Methadone for Opioid Dependence



- Methadone can only be prescribed/dispensed for maintenance treatment at a licensed Opioid Treatment Program (OTP)
- An OTP is also permitted to dispense buprenorphine and other FDA-approved medications
- OTPs must:
  - Be certified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
  - Be registered as a Narcotic Treatment Program (NTP) by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)
  - Be licensed by the NJ Department of Health, Certificate of Need & Licensing (CN&L)
  - Receive accreditation by the Joint Commission, CARF, or COA
  - Provide medical services (physical evaluations, labs, urine drug screens, etc.) and substance use counseling sessions, with frequency of counseling based on phase system

# OTP Guidance in Response to COVID-19



- The NJ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) issued guidance to OTPs on March 24, 2020:
  - Take-home medication
    - ✦ Individuals deemed stable by provider can receive up to 28 days of take-home medication.
    - ✦ Individuals deemed less stable by provider can receive up to 14 days of take-home medication.
  - Counseling
    - ✦ Telehealth options for continued prescribing and/or counseling in times of emergency or disaster should be utilized to the extent possible, maintaining standards for patient confidentiality.
    - ✦ In order to reduce patient attendance and volume at OTPs, group counseling should be curtailed and in-person individual and other meetings should be curtailed or provided by way of telehealth.

# Strategies to Assist OTPs in Response to COVID-19



- **Distribution of naloxone**
  - Provision of naloxone kits to each licensed OTP. Number of naloxone kits based on agency census.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
  - Provision of a small supply of N95 masks and sterile gloves for licensed OTPs.
- **Guidance documents**
  - The NJ Department of Human Services (DHS) and DMHAS issued several guidance documents for providers in effort to assist them in ensuring quality programming in a safe and effective way:
    - ✦ <https://nj.gov/humanservices/coronavirus.html>



# Resources



- NJ Department of Health  
[www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml](http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml)
- 24-Hour COVID-19 Hotline: 1-800-222-1222 (in-state) or (800) 962-1253 (out-of-state)
- Contact Information for local health departments in NJ:  
<http://localhealth.nj.gov>
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention:  
[www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/coronavirus>
- NJ Board of Pharmacy  
<https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/phar>