



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

DATE: May 21, 2021

Behavioral Health Information Notice No: 21-024

TO: California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California Association for Alcohol/Drug Educators
California Association of Alcohol & Drug Program Executives, Inc.
California Association of DUI Treatment Programs
California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies
California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals
California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies
California Hospital Association
California Opioid Maintenance Providers
California State Association of Counties
Coalition of Alcohol and Drug Associations
County Behavioral Health Directors
County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California
County Drug & Alcohol Administrators

SUBJECT: Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) – Expanding Access to Medications for Addiction Treatment (MAT, also known as medication-assisted treatment)

PURPOSE: To provide policy updates and clarification on access to MAT

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) first received approval on August 13, 2015, from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to implement the DMC-ODS Waiver. Authority for the DMC-ODS waiver was reauthorized as part of the state's Medi-Cal 2020 1115 waiver for a five-year term from January 2016 to December 2020. Prior to the expiration date, DHCS received a one-year waiver extension on December 29, 2020, that extends DMC-ODS through December 31, 2021.

CMS has approved several policy changes/clarifications in key areas effective retroactively to January 1, 2021, and continuing through the duration of the extension period. These changes and clarifications are specified in amendments to the special terms and conditions of the DMC-ODS waiver. DHCS is currently preparing a new

waiver request that, if approved by CMS, would authorize the DMC-ODS waiver through December 2026.

This information notice clarifies the policy related to access to MAT in the DMC-ODS waiver.

POLICY:

Under the DMC-ODS waiver, MAT includes all medications approved under section 505 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 355) and all biological products licensed under section 351 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 262) to treat SUDs. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration defines MAT as the use of medications, in combination with counseling or behavioral therapies to provide a “whole-patient” approach to the treatment of substance use disorders (SUDs). The Food and Drug Administration has approved these medications to treat alcohol and opioid use disorders. According to the federal opioid treatment standards¹ and the SUPPORT Act², clients receiving MAT for SUDs in DMC-ODS shall be offered counseling or behavioral therapy, in accordance with an individualized care plan.

MAT Services: DMC-ODS Counties shall require that all DMC-ODS providers, at all levels of care, demonstrate that they either directly offer or have effective referral mechanisms to MAT to beneficiaries with SUD diagnoses that are treatable with Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medications and biological products. An appropriate referral to any Medi-Cal provider rendering MAT to the beneficiary is compliant whether or not they seek reimbursement through DMC-ODS. DMC-certified providers in DMC-ODS programs will be reimbursed for the ordering, prescribing, administering, and monitoring of all FDA-approved medications and FDA-licensed biologicals utilized for treating SUDs, including long-acting injectable naltrexone and long acting injectable buprenorphine.

Additionally, Narcotic Treatment Programs (NTPs) are now required to directly offer MAT to beneficiaries with SUD diagnoses that are treatable with FDA-approved medications and biological products, including methadone, buprenorphine (transmucosal and long-acting injectable), naltrexone (oral and long-acting injectable), naloxone, and disulfiram. Such medications are only required to be offered to the extent

¹ Federal Opioid Treatment Standards (42 CFR 8.12(f)(5))

² The Substance Use–Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (“SUPPORT”) for Patients and Communities Act, Public Law 115-271, Section 1006(b) (See 42 USC §1396d(a)(29); 42 USC §1396d(ee))

that they can be readily purchased by the NTP. When these medications are provided through an NTP, the cost of the medication is reimbursed through a bundled NTP rate.

DMC-certified providers shall offer counseling or behavioral therapy to MAT beneficiaries in addition to the MAT medications. However, a DMC-certified provider shall provide a beneficiary with the MAT medication regardless of whether or not the beneficiary opts to receive the counseling or behavioral therapy services.

MAT Delivered at Alternative Sites (referred to as “Additional MAT” in the DMC-ODS one-year extension STC 137):

“MAT Delivered at Alternative Sites” is an optional service in DMC-ODS. This optional service includes the cost of providers ordering and purchasing FDA-approved medications and biologicals used to treat SUDs outside the Medi-Cal pharmacy benefit and administering them to beneficiaries in alternative settings, such as criminal justice settings or street-based outreach. Beneficiaries provided with medications through this optional service must also be offered counseling or other behavioral therapy.

Medi-Cal Pharmacy Benefit:

Outside of the required DMC-ODS MAT benefit and the MAT Delivered at Alternative Sites benefit, all medications and biological products utilized to treat SUDs, including long-acting injectables, continue to be available through the Medi-Cal pharmacy benefit without prior authorization, and can be delivered to provider offices through pharmacies.

These changes are effective as of January 1, 2021.

If you have questions, please contact countysupport@dhcs.ca.gov

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Shaina Zurlin, PsyD, LCSW, Chief
Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Division