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PROVIDER BULLETIN

TOPIC: Buprenorphine (Suboxone) Use

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A Medline search was conducted February 11, 2013, with the focus on use of sublingual buprenorphine and high dose transdermal buprenorphine for chronic pain. Studies including commercially available doses of Butrans were not included.

Summary: The use of sublingual buprenorphine for chronic pain is off-label. The Division standard for support of off-label use is two positive, prospective, randomized, placebo-controlled studies. The published literature regarding the use of sublingual buprenorphine does not meet this standard with the majority of studies being open-label and/or retrospective. Results are mixed with high incidence of discontinuation due to adverse effects. The use of buprenorphine (Suboxone) for pain will be denied by the Division.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) encourages all physicians who are interested in treating opioid dependence – including those who already meet 1 or more of the qualifying criteria – to participate in a DATA 2000 certification program before prescribing Suboxone Film.

Summary: Only those physicians who meet the qualifications according to the Suboxone Sublingual Film website can prescribe Suboxone for the treatment of opioid dependence. This certification is endorsed by the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP), American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine (AOAAM), American Psychiatric Association (APA), and American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). A copy of the DATA 2000 certification must be on record with the Division. Qualifications for certification can be found at: www.suboxone.com/hcp/certification/qualifications.aspx

Suboxone will be approved for use in opioid dependence for up to 2 years.

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