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PROVIDER BULLETIN

TOPIC: Buprenorphine/Naloxone (Suboxone)

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An UpToDate search was conducted August 3, 2017, with the focus on use of sublingual Buprenorphine/naloxone and high dose transdermal buprenorphine to help assist in management of Claimants on Suboxone.

Summary: Suboxone use is limited to patients with opioid addiction. Approval will be given for one year. Use will be reviewed on an annual basis. Provider will be asked to submit a treatment plan with details about plans to taper the dose as well as information about previous attempts to taper. The goal is for the Provider to titrate to an adequate maintenance dose as rapidly as possible based on control of acute withdrawal symptoms.

Induction Dosing Guidelines

Buccal film: Up to 8.4mg/day
Sublingual film: Up to 16mg/day
Sublingual tablet: Up to 11.4mg/day

Maintenance Dosing Guidelines

Buccal film: 2.1mg to 12.6mg/day
Sublingual film: 2 to 16mg/day
Sublingual tablet: 2 to 16mg/day

Summary: The use of buprenorphine (Suboxone) for pain will be denied by the Division.

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.

- **Suboxone will be approved for use in opioid dependence for up to a year as long as the claimant is not taking opioids in addition to the suboxone.**

Of Note: Benzodiazepines and other CNS depressants: Concomitant use of benzodiazepines or other CNS depressants, including alcohol and opioids may result in profound sedation, respiratory depression, coma, and death

- **Benzodiazepines and other CNS depressants may be denied if prescribed together with Suboxone.**

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



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