Policy for Safe Dispensing of Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT)

This document is prepared by www.pharmasist.ca

Patient identification, assessment, documentation, secure custody, and diversion prevention are mandatory for all OAT dispensing activities.

1. Purpose

To ensure the safe, effective, and compliant dispensing of Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT), including methadone, buprenorphine/naloxone, Kadian®, and other approved OAT medications.

Scope

- Pharmacists
- Pharmacy Technicians
- Pharmacy Assistants
- Support Staff involved in OAT services

Responsibilities

- Pharmacists perform assessments and clinical oversight.
- Technicians assist with preparation and dispensing.
- Support staff maintain records and workflow compliance.

2. Patient Identification

- Verify patient identity before every dose.
- Use at least two identifiers whenever possible.
- Acceptable identifiers include government-issued ID and patient photograph on file.
- Ensure the individual receiving medication matches identification provided.
- Document identity concerns immediately.

Before Dosing Assessment

- Review patient history.
- Review current medications.
- Assess contraindications.
- Assess missed doses.
- Assess intoxication or impairment.
- Document findings.

After Dosing Assessment

- Observe for adverse reactions.
- Assess patient response.
- Address concerns immediately.
- Document observations.
- Record follow-up actions.

3. Documentation Requirements

- Maintain complete OAT records.
- Document patient assessments.
- Document prescriptions and dose changes.
- Document carries and missed doses.
- Document patient interactions.
- Ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

4. Continuity of Care

- Coordinate with prescribers and healthcare providers.
- Support adherence to treatment plans.
- Provide patient education.
- Facilitate uninterrupted therapy whenever possible.
- Document communication with other providers.

Handling and Storage

- Store OAT medications according to manufacturer requirements.
- Protect medication integrity.
- Prepare doses accurately.
- Follow all compounding and dilution procedures where applicable.
- Maintain clean preparation areas.

Secure Custody

- Store OAT medications in locked areas.
- Restrict access to authorized personnel.
- Monitor inventory regularly.
- Investigate discrepancies immediately.
- Maintain diversion prevention measures.

5. Carries and Take-Home Doses

- Discuss safe storage with every patient receiving carries.
- Recommend lockboxes for all take-home doses.
- Educate patients regarding diversion prevention.
- Advise patients to keep medication away from children and unauthorized individuals.
- Encourage return of empty methadone bottles for disposal.

Lockbox Education

- Provide lockbox when appropriate.
- Demonstrate proper use.
- Explain secure storage requirements.
- Document lockbox counselling.
- Document lockbox provision when supplied.

Patient Safety Discussion

- Overdose prevention.
- Safe storage.
- Avoid sharing medication.
- Naloxone availability.
- Emergency contact instructions.

6. OAT Log Book Requirements

- Maintain a log book for all observed doses.
- Record date and time of administration.
- Record medication and dose administered.
- Record observations and notes.
- Obtain patient signature after dosing.
- Obtain pharmacist signature after dosing.
- Audit log books regularly for accuracy.

7. Compliance Monitoring

The pharmacy manager shall periodically review OAT documentation, log books, carry procedures, inventory controls, lockbox documentation, and patient identification procedures to ensure compliance with regulatory and professional standards.