



DOHMH Buprenorphine Initiative

Mental Hygiene Services

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Presentation Outline

- Why we need Buprenorphine
- How Buprenorphine works
- Introducing Buprenorphine treatment in NYC

Why We Need Buprenorphine

- A new treatment for addiction to heroin and narcotic pain relievers
- One fifth of all U.S. heroin users live in NYC
- Among large U.S. cities, NYC has the highest heroin use per capita
- 200,000 New Yorkers are using heroin

Why We Need Buprenorphine

- Untreated heroin addiction leads to:
 - Death from overdose
 - Infectious diseases (HIV and hepatitis)
 - Crime
 - Disruption of families
- The financial burden is estimated to be in the billions of dollars annually

Why We Need Buprenorphine

- Narcotic pain relievers are the second most commonly abused drugs
- They include medications such as vicodin, oxycontin, darvon, and percocet
- Individuals addicted to these medications may become heroin users

Why We Need Buprenorphine

- Opioid addiction can be effectively treated with medications
- Methadone treatment is unpopular because a daily clinic visit is required
- Only 34,000 New Yorkers are enrolled in methadone programs

How Buprenorphine Works

- It is a new treatment for people addicted to heroin or narcotic pain relievers
- Unlike methadone, patients do not have to attend a clinic every day to take it
- Prescriptions can be written in a doctor's office and filled at a pharmacy

How Buprenorphine Works

- It is a partial agonist
 - Weaker effects
 - Safer to use
- Long duration of action
- Mild withdrawal symptoms

How Buprenorphine Works

- It is taken in the form of a sublingual tablet
- It is combined with naloxone to prevent injection use
- The brand name for the combination tablet is Suboxone

How Buprenorphine Works

- Patients can take it temporarily as a detoxification agent
- Patients can be maintained on it for long periods of time

Introducing Buprenorphine Treatment in NYC

The Challenges

- Federal and state regulations and restrictions
 - The 30 patient limit
 - The 8-hour training requirement
 - Administrative requirements
- Physician attitudes
- Insurance coverage
- Poorly promoted by Reckitt Benckiser

Introducing Buprenorphine Treatment in NYC

DOHMH Action Plan

- Introduce Buprenorphine treatment in:
 - Chemical dependency programs
 - Primary care clinics
 - HIV/AIDS clinics
 - City correctional system

Introducing Buprenorphine Treatment in NYC

DOHMH Action Plan

- Ensure fair reimbursement
 - Work to establish an insurance rate code for Buprenorphine induction
- Advocate for appropriate (not burdensome) regulations
- Collect data on:
 - Number of physicians prescribing Buprenorphine
 - Number of patients taking Buprenorphine

Summary

Buprenorphine

- A new medication for the treatment of opioid addiction that can be prescribed in a doctor's office
- A new opportunity to engage thousands of individuals that had refused treatment with methadone
- DOHMH is working to see that New Yorkers know about about it, have access to it, and receive treatment with it