



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Dr. Michelle Morse, MD, MPH  
*Acting Commissioner*

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Gotham Center  
42-09 28th St.  
Long Island City, NY 11101

Dear Colleague,

In response to the national overdose crisis, the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act was signed into federal law and became effective on December 29, 2022. Important changes resulting from the MAT Act include:

- Eliminating the requirement for special registration through the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), commonly referred to as an “X-waiver,” to prescribe or dispense buprenorphine to treat opioid use disorder (OUD). This means that any health care provider with a standard DEA registration may now prescribe buprenorphine to treat OUD.
- Eliminating limitations on the number of patients that a health care provider is permitted to treat with buprenorphine for OUD.

This change was enacted more than one year ago in response to the unabated overdose crisis. However, rates of buprenorphine prescribing in New York City (NYC) have remained unchanged. NYC continues to experience unprecedented rates of overdose death, driven primarily by the presence of fentanyl in the unregulated drug supply. The burden of overdose is not evenly distributed across the city. Significant inequities exist by race and ethnicity and neighborhood of residence, with Black New Yorkers, older New Yorkers, and residents of the South Bronx and Harlem having the highest rates of overdose death. Structural racism and long-term disinvestment in these and other communities drive geographic and racial inequities in overdose deaths and other negative health outcomes.

As health care providers, you play an essential part in addressing the overdose crisis in NYC; we encourage you to make treating OUD a standard part of your practice. OUD is a chronic medical

condition that can be treated with buprenorphine. Buprenorphine is one of two first-line treatments for OUD—it reduces drug use and the risk of overdose death, keeps people in treatment, and improves health and social outcomes. Buprenorphine can be prescribed in your practice as you would prescribe medications for other chronic health conditions. Despite buprenorphine’s effectiveness, only one in five people with OUD in the United States receive medication for treatment. Further, in NYC, buprenorphine access has historically been concentrated in areas with the highest incomes and the lowest percentages of Black and Latino residents.

Health care providers are in a key position to provide effective, evidence-based treatment to people with OUD. The MAT Act eliminates barriers that have long impeded the integration of buprenorphine treatment into general practice settings, and we invite you to act on this opportunity.

The following resources will direct you to clinical guidance on prescribing, online training modules, additional information about the MAT Act and technical assistance:

- American Society of Addiction Medicine’s Buprenorphine Mini Course:  
<https://elearning.asam.org/products/buprenorphine-mini-course-building-on-federal-prescribing-guidance>
- Providers Clinical Support System educational resources and mentoring: [pcssnow.org](https://pcssnow.org)
- New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) buprenorphine resources: [bit.ly/nysdoh-buprenorphine](https://bit.ly/nysdoh-buprenorphine)
- Free NYS DOH Clinical Education Initiative online courses that meet the DEA education requirement:  
[bit.ly/NYSDOHCEI\\_DEA-Ed](https://bit.ly/NYSDOHCEI_DEA-Ed)
- MATTERS (Medication for Addiction Treatment and Electronic Referrals): Information and resources on DEA training requirements: [mattersnetwork.org/dea-training-0523](https://mattersnetwork.org/dea-training-0523)
- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) educational resources, mentoring, and learning communities: [nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/alcohol-and-drug-use.page](https://nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/alcohol-and-drug-use.page)

Data:

- NYC Health Department Epi Data Brief on unintentional overdose deaths: [on.nyc.gov/epi-data-brief-137](https://on.nyc.gov/epi-data-brief-137)

Federal and state guidance:

- NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports announcement on the X-waiver: [bit.ly/nys-x-waiver](https://bit.ly/nys-x-waiver)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration letter addressing perceived barriers to buprenorphine treatment: [bit.ly/samhsa-letter-buprenorphine](https://bit.ly/samhsa-letter-buprenorphine)

Thank you for your dedication to the health of New Yorkers and for your partnership as we work to eliminate this overdose crisis.

Sincerely,



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