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Visit the A4PN [COVID-19 page](#) for current COVID-19 Pharmacotherapy/MATOD information.

Register [here](#) for our live webinars on 26 May or 2 June on *SafeScript: Tackling the Difficult Conversations*.

General Update

Interim National COVID-19 Pharmacotherapy/MATOD guidance

Interim **national** guidance for the delivery of medication assisted treatment of opioid dependence (also known as MATOD, or opioid pharmacotherapy) during COVID-19 is now available. Click [here](#) to view this guidance.

The guidance will assist clinicians in ensuring continuity of MATOD during the COVID-19 pandemic. It demonstrates how clinicians can adapt treatment during this time and is intended to be read alongside state and territory guidance issued in response to COVID-19. Victorian guidance is available [here](#).

It recognises that many jurisdictions are at different stages of response, and also that many of the communications from government authorities relate to regulatory or guideline changes, rather than focusing on aspects of clinical care.

Survey Update

We appreciate that you all are extremely busy at the moment and would like to thank everyone who completed our telephone/online survey. The survey results have provided the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and our Pharmacotherapy Network with invaluable insights into your capacity and support needs. **We will consider the information provided by you in the surveys as current and correct, until advised otherwise by you.** Please advise us if this information changes, so we can update our records to reflect this.

Client Access to Pharmacotherapy during COVID-19

Pharmacotherapy clients are now experiencing greater difficulty with accessing treatment. [DirectLine](#) and [PAMS](#) are the primary services by which clients source a prescriber or a pharmacy for MATOD treatment. Please advise DirectLine and PAMS if you are able to take on new clients at this time:

- ❖ Prescribers: Complete the [DirectLine registration form](#) and [PAMS registration form](#)
- ❖ Pharmacies: Contact [DirectLine](#) and [PAMS](#) directly.

Registering with DirectLine and PAMS does not mean you will be inundated with clients – you will be contacted to obtain your consent on **each** occasion that a client is referred to you, so rest assured you will have full control of your caseload at all times.

Pharmacy Update

PAMS COVID-19 Page and Consumer Support

PAMS has developed COVID-19 recommendations for pharmacotherapy consumers, available [here](#) – please print and display this information in your dosing area and direct patients to this website if they have further questions.

Pharmacy MATOD Registration Form

The challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic mean it is more important than ever before to have greater access to pharmacotherapy services. Having more pharmacotherapy-registered pharmacies could prove critical if pharmacies are forced to temporarily close due to COVID-19 exposure. If you are in a region which you think could benefit from having greater access to pharmacy services, please share this registration [form](#) with your pharmacist colleagues who are not currently providing MATOD services.

COVID-19 Service Continuity Checklist

The COVID-19 outbreak requires pharmacies to prepare and plan ahead for a potential sudden pharmacy and/or pharmacotherapy program closure. Pharmacies can use this [Service Continuity Checklist](#) to ensure they are prepared for this situation. The document includes recommended steps to follow if pharmacy/program closure is necessary. The first step is to **identify the closest pharmacy(ies) that could take on your patients in the event of an immediate closure**, to create a “support network”. Please advise our Pharmacotherapy Network if you require assistance with arranging this support network.

Prescriber Update

Long Acting Injectable Buprenorphine (LAIB)

All accredited MATOD prescribers are eligible to prescribe the LAIB (Sublocade® and Buvidal®) once they have met the following requirements:

1. Watched the [Sublocade](#) and [Budival](#) educational videos
2. Emailed Maureen Chesler at DHHS (Maureen.Chesler@dhhs.vic.gov.au) with the details below, and received approval confirmation in response
3. Applied for and received approval for a LAIB permit.

The email to Maureen Chesler should state the following:

- *I have completed the relevant training (MATOD Module 1 & 2)*
- *I have watched the educational material/videos for Sublocade and Budival*
- *I am confident and comfortable in prescribing and administering Sublocade/Budival*
- *I have read the PI and patient booklet information and the relevant Victorian legislation*
- *My AHPRA registration number is XXXXXXXX.*

All the latest LAIB material is available [here](#).

Increase in Suboxone prescribing limit

The recently-released **Victorian** COVID-19 Pharmacotherapy/MATOD Guidance (available [here](#)) outlines that all prescribers can now prescribe buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone) for up to 30 patients (increased from previous limit of 5) without any need for additional training.

This change enables prescribers who have not completed the MATOD training to:

- ❖ assist accredited MATOD prescribers, if they are not able to prescribe due to illness or self-isolation
- ❖ treat new patients requiring Suboxone

This [16 minute video](#) and [4 page guide](#) can support prescribers new to prescribing Suboxone. Additionally, free supports available to all prescribers are outlined below.

Free supports for all prescribers

Free clinical support, advice and secondary consultation is available for all prescribers from:

- ❖ The [Drug and Alcohol Clinical Advisory Service \(DACAS\)](#) on 1800 812 804, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

- ❖ The *Area 4 Pharmacotherapy Network*, providing direct access to local Addiction Medicine Specialists and GP Mentors. Click [here](#) if you are a prescriber in eastern metropolitan Melbourne; click [here](#) if you are a prescriber in southern metropolitan Melbourne. The *Area 4 Pharmacotherapy Network* also runs bi-monthly Peer Group Learning meetings led by these expert clinicians in Box Hill, Frankston and Bayside, designed to support prescribers managing patients on MATOD. Contact our team on the details below to find out more.

For more information or support queries

Visit A4PN.org.au

or contact us via details listed below:

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Please note: These e-newsletters are intended for prescribers and pharmacies providing MATOD/pharmacotherapy treatment and will be released when key information is made available for dissemination. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us at A4PN@semphn.org.au.