



PRACTICE DIRECTION

Prescribing Methadone or Suboxone

Initial Approval: November 22, 2018

Effective Date: January 1, 2019

Reviewed with NO Changes

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Practice Directions set out requirements related to specific aspects of the practice of medicine. Practice Directions are used to enhance, explain, or guide members with respect to the subject matter relevant to the practice of medicine. Practice Directions provide more detailed information than contained in *The Regulated Health Professions Act*, Regulations, Bylaws, and Standards of Practice issued by the College. All members must comply with Practice Directions, per s. 86 of *The Regulated Health Professions Act*.

The following is an area of practice that requires approval from the Registrar prior to practice.

This Practice Direction is made under the authority of s. 85 of the RHPA with specific reference to s. 5.9 to 5.11 of the CPSM General Regulation.

1. Approval from the Registrar is required to prescribe methadone or suboxone
 - 1.1. In accordance with s. 5.9 to 5.11 of the CPSM General Regulation, a member must obtain approval from the Registrar, in an approved form, to prescribe methadone or suboxone.
 - 1.2. The following details in the initial application sections constitute the approved form.
2. The Registrar's approval to prescribe methadone or suboxone is based on the following criteria:
 - 2.1. Prescribing methadone for opioid use disorder
 - 2.1.1. Initial application
 - 2.1.1.a. The Registrar may approve a physician to prescribe methadone for opioid dependency if the following criteria are met:
 - 2.1.1.a.i. The applicant must apply in writing for approval to prescribe methadone for opioid dependency.
 - 2.1.1.a.ii. The applicant must supply the name of two referees who must be contacted directly by the College for the reference. The references received must be satisfactory to the Registrar.
 - 2.1.1.a.iii. The applicant must successfully complete a methadone course approved by the Registrar.
 - 2.1.1.a.iv. Upon completion of the course, the applicant must spend at least four half days working directly with a supervising physician approved by the College. At the end of that period the supervising physician must provide a written

opinion to the College that the applicant is fit to prescribe methadone for opioid dependency.

2.1.2. Renewal

2.1.2.a. An approval is valid until its expiry date. Irrespective of the date of its issue, all approvals shall expire on June 1, 2021 and, if renewed, every three years thereafter. In order to receive a renewed approval from the Registrar to prescribe methadone for opioid dependence, a physician must demonstrate compliance with a continuing professional development program approved by the Registrar.

2.2. Prescribing methadone for analgesia

2.2.1. Initial application

2.2.1.a. The Registrar may approve a physician to prescribe methadone for analgesia if the following criteria are met:

2.2.1.a.i. The applicant must apply in writing for approval to prescribe methadone for analgesia.

2.2.1.a.ii. Supply the name of two referees who must be supervising physicians from the applicant's palliative care or anesthesia training program and who must be contacted directly by the College for the reference. The references received must be satisfactory to the Registrar.

2.2.1.a.iii. The applicant must meet one of the following:

- provide proof, satisfactory to the Registrar, that he or she held an approval to prescribe methadone from a medical regulatory authority in another Canadian jurisdiction before moving to Manitoba, and that he or she is in good standing in that jurisdiction; or
- provide proof, satisfactory to the Registrar, that he or she has met the specific educational requirements approved by the College to prescribe methadone in a personal care home setting, and he or she agrees to limit methadone prescribing to that setting.

2.2.2. Renewal

2.2.2.a. An approval is valid until its expiry date. Irrespective of the date of its issue, all approvals shall expire on June 1, 2021 and, if renewed, every three years thereafter. In order to receive a renewed approval from the Registrar to prescribe methadone for analgesia, a physician must demonstrate participation in continuing professional development relevant to prescribing methadone for analgesia.

2.3. Prescribing methadone for analgesia for palliative care

2.3.1. Initial application

2.3.1.a. The Registrar may authorize a physician to prescribe methadone for analgesia for palliative care if the following criteria are met:

- 2.3.1.a.i. The applicant must apply in writing to the Registrar for approval to prescribe methadone for analgesia for palliative care.
- 2.3.1.a.ii. Supply the name of two referees who must be supervising physicians from the applicant's palliative care or anesthesia training program and who must be contacted directly by the College for the reference. The references received must be satisfactory to the Registrar.
- 2.3.1.a.iii. The applicant must meet one of the following:
 - provide proof, satisfactory to the Registrar, that he or she held an approval to prescribe methadone for analgesia for palliative care in another Canadian jurisdiction before moving to Manitoba, and that he or she is in good standing in that jurisdiction; or
 - provide proof, satisfactory to the Registrar, that he or she has successfully completed the online methadone for Pain in Palliative Care learning module at <http://www.methadone4pain.ca/>.

2.3.1.b. The Registrar must impose the following conditions on the recipient of an approval:

- 2.3.1.b.i. For the first five methadone prescription starts under this approval, the physician is required to contact the on-call WRHA Palliative Care physician through St. Boniface Hospital Paging at (204)-237-2053. This support is available 24/7. The situation and the plan for methadone prescribing is to be reviewed with the palliative care physician, who will provide advice as needed.
- 2.3.1.b.ii. The palliative care physician is required to chart the discussion and recommendations in the patient's palliative care electronic health record.
- 2.3.1.b.iii. The physician receiving the advice is required to chart the interaction, advice received, and course of action taken. With ongoing changes in prescription, the physician should call a palliative care physician for advice if any concerns arise.
- 2.3.1.b.iv. When the mentorship phase is completed (after five prescription starts), the physician may prescribe methadone without the requirement to review with a

palliative care physician. Nonetheless, the WRHA palliative care physician group is available on a 24/7 basis for advice regarding palliative methadone prescribing (or for any other clinical palliative care advice).

2.3.2. Renewal

2.3.2.a. An approval is valid until its expiry date. Irrespective of the date of its issue, all approvals shall expire on June 1, 2021 and, if renewed, every three years thereafter. In order to receive a renewed approval from the Registrar to prescribe methadone for analgesia for palliative care purposes, a physician must demonstrate participation in continuing professional development relevant to prescribing methadone for analgesia for palliative care.

2.4. Prescribing Suboxone for opioid use disorder

2.4.1. Initial Application

2.4.1.a. The Registrar may approve a physician to prescribe Suboxone for opioid use disorder if the following criteria are met:

2.4.1.a.i. The applicant must apply in writing to the Registrar for approval to prescribe Suboxone for opioid use disorder.

2.4.1.a.ii. The applicant must be registered to prescribe drugs through the Manitoba Prescribing Practices Program (M3P).

2.4.1.a.iii. Applicants must have completed a recognized course for prescribing Suboxone approved by the College. This can be either a course offered by recognized experts in addiction medicine such as that offered by the College or the Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine, or an on-line course not associated with the pharmaceutical industry such as the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) Buprenorphine-Assisted Opioid Dependence Treatment course which is offered online.

2.4.2. Exemption from application criteria

2.4.2.a. Physicians who have extensive experience prescribing Suboxone in other jurisdictions are exempt from conditions imposed in 2.4.2.b. below provided that the physician includes appropriate documentation of their experience as part of their application to the Registrar in subsection 2.4.1. above and proof that he or she is in good standing in that jurisdiction.

2.4.2.b. The Registrar must impose the following conditions on the recipient of the approval:

2.4.2.b.i. Applicants who have not previously prescribed Suboxone for the treatment of opioid use disorder must have their first five starts mentored by a physician licensed in Manitoba who has experience in prescribing Suboxone.

2.4.2.b.ii. Mentorship can be through the Rapid Access to Consultative Expertise (RACE) substance use disorders line (when available). Alternately, the physician may choose to work with another physician with experience prescribing Suboxone, who agrees in writing to serve as a mentor to the physician. The physician and the mentor must both ensure that each of them creates and maintains appropriate documentation of the discussion and recommendations.

2.4.2.b.iii. Once mentorship is completed, appropriate documentation must be sent to the Registrar of the College by the mentor indicating that the applicant physician can prescribe Suboxone without further supervision.

2.4.3. Renewal

2.4.3.a. An approval is valid until its expiry date. Irrespective of the date of its issue, all approvals shall expire on June 1, 2021 and, if renewed, every three years thereafter. In order to receive a renewed approval from the Registrar to prescribe Suboxone for opioid use disorders, a physician must demonstrate participation in continuing professional development relevant to prescribing Suboxone for opioid use disorders.