



Communication to Members regarding Dr. A. Paul of Regina and Dr. B. Fern of Saskatoon Methadone and buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone) treatment for substance use disorders

Saskatchewan will be the first province in Canada to be provided with an exemption 56 to provide pharmacists the authority to prescribe for methadone and suboxone/buprenorphine in order to facilitate the urgent care of this group of patients and work collaboratively with our physician colleagues for better patient outcomes and a reduction of harm.

Patients of Dr. B Fern:

Members received previous notification that Dr. Brian Fern of Saskatoon was unable to practice due to medical reasons. [Urgent Notice - Dr. Fern OAT Patients](#), to date, this remains in effect.

Any patient who was receiving a prescription from Dr. B. Fern for either methadone or buprenorphine/naloxone is asked to contact Dr. M. Markentin at 306-664-4310, Saskatoon Community Clinic – Westside

Patients of Dr. A. Paul:

The Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals (SCPP) has received notice from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CPSS) that Dr. Ashis Paul of Regina will no longer be providing methadone or buprenorphine/naloxone prescriptions and treatment as of April 1, 2019.

Any patient who was receiving a prescription from Dr. A. Paul for either methadone or buprenorphine/naloxone is asked to attend the Harm Reduction Clinic at 1048 Albert St, Regina SK S4R 2P8 during their hours of operation and if possible, to call ahead to book an appointment at 306-766-6350 or fax to 306-766-7069.

Every effort is to be made by pharmacists who are presently dispensing to patients of Dr. A. Paul receiving methadone and/or buprenorphine/naloxone to identify those patients whose prescriptions will be expiring and providing them with assistance in contacting the Harm Reduction Clinic to obtain an appointment to continue treatment and recovery with a new practitioner.

Prescriptions written by Dr. A. Paul for methadone and/or buprenorphine/naloxone which have not been fully dispensed on April 1, 2019 are considered valid and under the pharmacists judgement can continue to be dispensed in full as per the SCPP guidance document [Prescription Validity](#).

Members are encouraged to pro-actively generate a list of all patients receiving methadone and buprenorphine/naloxone from Dr. A. Paul to determine the number of patients who are attending

the pharmacy, as well as the date the patient will require a new prescription and provide that information to the Harm Reduction clinic to assist in their triage efforts.

Section 56 Exemption:

SCPP has worked with Health Canada to obtain an [exemption under section 56](#) of the *Controlled Drugs and Substance Act* for pharmacists to prescribe methadone and buprenorphine/naloxone under [specific circumstances](#) for patients of Dr. A. Paul, Dr. B. Fern and potentially others upon communication by SCPP.

The exemption limits prescribing of methadone or buprenorphine/naloxone by pharmacists to patients of Dr. A. Paul and Dr. B. Fern who are unable to obtain an appointment with another practitioner prior to their prescription expiring. The exemption is to be used only:

- in circumstances when the patient is unable to obtain a new prescription from an authorized practitioner. Every attempt should be made to contact the Harm Reduction Clinic in Regina or Dr. Markentin in Saskatoon to obtain an appointment prior to prescribing.
- to continue a patient who is stable on methadone and/or buprenorphine/naloxone since January 1, 2019 up to and including March 31, 2019 at the **same dose, duration and conditions** (take home doses, etc.)
- when the pharmacist has reviewed the patient's medication history in the Pharmaceutical Information Program (PIP) and the patient's treatment history in the eHealth viewer, including applicable lab values prior to prescribing and/or dispensing methadone and/or buprenorphine/naloxone.
- when the pharmacist has confirmed when the patient received and consumed their last dose of methadone and/or buprenorphine/naloxone.
- when the pharmacist has requested, received and reviewed the most recently prescribed prescription of Dr. A. Paul or Dr. B. Fern for methadone and/or buprenorphine/naloxone as well as relevant records of take-home dosages, patient notes and any previous pharmacy-to-practitioner communication. Pharmacists are to request this information be provided to them from the previous pharmacy if they did not fill the most recent prescription.
- in circumstances when the same pharmacist/pharmacy both prescribes and dispenses the methadone or suboxone/buprenorphine. Note – the [Health Canada exemption](#) requires that the same pharmacist/pharmacy both prescribe and dispense the medication.
- when pharmacists use the attached [Pharmacist Assessment Record \(PAR\) - Methadone](#) or [Pharmacist Assessment Record \(PAR\) - Suboxone](#) and provide complete documentation of the rationale for prescribing on the PAR.
- when pharmacists provide the PAR to the required triage center i.e. Dr. Markentin in Saskatoon or the Harm Reduction Center in Regina as soon as possible.
- when any take home doses continue to be provided to the patient when the patient presents at the pharmacy with a lockable container or receptacle to transport the take home doses.
- when pharmacists communicate with patients about the requirement to see an authorized practitioner as soon as possible.
- pursuant to the exemption and in consideration of the SCPP Regulatory Bylaws, Part K, pharmacists may prescribe for a patient in circumstances where the previous prescription was prescribed by a pharmacist as per this exemption only for the above-named

patients. For example, if pharmacist prescribed 4 weeks' worth of methadone on April 1 and the patient was not able to be triaged at harm reduction within that 4 weeks, a pharmacist may prescribe again. As soon as a physician has prescribed for the patient the exemption becomes null and void for that patient.

- after pharmacists have reviewed the section 56 exemption and understand the exemption.
- when pharmacists have the necessary knowledge, skill and competency to safely provide the required pharmaceutical care for patients receiving methadone or buprenorphine/naloxone for the [treatment of substance use disorders](#). Information can be found in the College of Physicians and Surgeons (beginning on page 13)

In instances of "Missed/Lost/Spoiled/Emesis Doses" prescriptions may be written to replace those doses as outlined in the [Opioid Agonist Therapy Standards and Guidelines](#) (beginning on page 46).

The exemption is valid until September 30, 2019 or until further communication is received from SCPP.

The exemption is not to be used for patients who have received a prescription from another authorized practitioner.

Pharmacists who do not presently dispense methadone or suboxone/buprenorphine and are unable to assist a patient who no longer has a valid prescription must assist the patient in obtaining care from another pharmacy which does dispense methadone and/or suboxone/buprenorphine.

The section 56 exemption does not limit pharmacists from any pharmacy from prescribing and dispensing methadone or buprenorphine/naloxone. However, the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals expects all pharmacists to ensure they have the required skills, knowledge and competency to provide safe and appropriate care for all patients.

Please note - SCPP has removed the 2001 Methadone Guidelines from the reference manual and recommends all pharmacists review the [CPSS OAT Standards and Guidelines](#)

SCPP wishes to remind all members that patients have the right to choose their pharmacy and as such patients of these two physicians may present to new pharmacies to obtain their treatment closer to home.

Finally, SCPP has worked with Drug Plan & Extended Benefits Branch (DPEBB) and Non-insured Health Benefits (NIHB) to ensure prescriptions prescribed by pharmacists for methadone and suboxone/buprenorphine are able to be processed. For any billing related concerns please contact them directly.

If you have any questions or require clarification on any of the above information please ensure you contact SCPP office at info@saskpharm.ca or call Lori Postnikoff, Deputy Registrar at 306-584-2292