

Opioid agonist therapy Gap Coverage Program

Information for patients

What is opioid agonist therapy?

Opioid agonist therapy (OAT), which entails the provision of medications like buprenorphine/naloxone or methadone, is an evidence-based treatment option for opioid use disorder. The costs of OAT, however, can sometimes be too expensive for someone without health benefits coverage.

What is the Gap Coverage Program?

If you do not have supplementary health benefits coverage, the cost of OAT should not be a barrier to accessing treatment.

The OAT Gap Coverage Program is designed to help reduce the financial barrier that may prevent or deter someone from seeking treatment for opioid use disorder. The program provides immediate coverage for OAT medications for 120 days at no cost until the enrolment process in a supplementary health benefits plan is complete.

Am I eligible?

If you have a prescription for buprenorphine/naloxone or methadone and have an Alberta Personal Health Number (PHN), but do not have health benefits coverage, you are eligible for the OAT Gap Coverage Program.

How do I enrol?

Enrolment in the OAT Gap Coverage Program immediately takes effect when you present your prescription for buprenorphine/naloxone or methadone, along with your Personal Health Number (i.e. Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan) at any Alberta pharmacy.

Treatment Options

For more information on commencing treatment for opioid use disorder, call the Alberta Health Services Addiction Helpline at 1-866-332-2322, or talk to your health care provider.

Additional information can also be found at www.alberta.ca/opioid-reponse-options-for-care.aspx

Visit alberta.ca/opioid for more information

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What if I don't have a Personal Health Number?

If you do not have a Personal Health Number, you can obtain one by following the process outlined at www.alberta.ca/ahcip.aspx or by calling 1-800-232-7215.

How do I keep receiving coverage beyond the 120 days?

To ensure you continue receiving coverage for your OAT medications beyond the 120 days of the Gap Coverage Program, you need to enrol in a supplementary health benefits plan.

The Alberta government offers a number of health benefit plans. Most government-sponsored health benefit plans, such as plans for low-income Albertans, do not have premiums. If you are not eligible for a low-income health benefit plan, there are other government-sponsored health benefit plans, such as the Non-Group coverage plan, that may be right for you. Depending on the plan you qualify for, you may have to pay monthly plan premiums and/or co-payments.

If you have applied for health benefits but they don't start until after the 120 days of OAT gap coverage is up, you can apply for an extension. You, or someone on your behalf, must complete the extension request form and submit it to Alberta Blue Cross. You can find the form at alberta.ca/opioid-agonist-therapy-gap-coverage-program.aspx. Talk to your health provider for information and support.

Find a benefits plan

For information, or to enrol in a government-sponsored benefit plan, visit alberta.ca and search "health benefits" or call the Alberta Supports Contact Centre at 1-877-644-9992

Visit alberta.ca/opioid for more information

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