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COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
& SURGEONS OF ALBERTA

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Office Supply for Opioid Agonist Treatment

Under Review: Yes

Issued By: Council: TBD

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The ***Standards of Practice*** of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta ("CPSA") are the **minimum** standards of professional behavior and ethical conduct expected of all regulated members registered in Alberta. Standards of Practice are enforceable under the *Health Professions Act* and will be referenced in the management of complaints and in discipline hearings. CPSA also provides **Advice to the Profession** to support the implementation of the Standards of Practice.

PURPOSE

This standard outlines minimum requirements for regulated members who use written orders to obtain and maintain an office supply of medications for opioid agonist treatment (OAT).

The standard is intended to support timely access to OAT in rural or remote locations with limited access to pharmacy services while ensuring:

- OAT is provided within the regulated member's competence and scope of practice;
- written orders for OAT are used only where authorized;
- medications are obtained, stored, administered and managed safely;
- administration and adverse reactions to opioids are appropriately documented; and
- opioid dispensing information is entered into the Pharmaceutical Information Network (PIN) in real time.

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SCOPE

This standard applies to regulated members who have CPSA approval to issue written orders for an office supply of OAT medications.

A written order for an office supply of OAT may only be used under this standard to obtain OAT medications for administration to patients in a rural or remote clinical practice location with limited access to pharmacy services.

This standard applies to the issuing of written orders and the procurement, storage, administration, reconciliation, and documentation of OAT medications obtained through a written order.

This standard does **not** authorize written orders for:

- medications other than OAT medications; or
- OAT medications to be dispensed for use outside the regulated member's clinical practice.

Terms used in the Standards of Practice:

- "Regulated member" means any person who is registered or who is required to be registered as a member of this College. CPSA regulates physicians, surgeons, osteopaths and physician assistants.
- "Must" refers to a mandatory requirement.
- "May" means that the physician or physician assistant may exercise reasonable discretion.
- "Patient" includes, where applicable, the patient's legal guardian or substitute decision maker.

Regulated members must remain aware of and comply with all applicable legislation, regulations and ministerial orders, including amendments as they come into force. In the event of a conflict, those requirements take precedence over this standard

The [to be developed] Advice to the Profession document provides additional guidance to support regulated members in applying this standard in practice. Related standards and companion resources are listed at the end of this document.

DEFINITIONS

Office supply: for the purpose of this standard, prescription medications securely held by a regulated health professional at their work location for the purpose of administering to a patient within their clinical practice.

Opioid agonist treatment (OAT): the provision of medications to treat opioid use disorder (OUD). For the purpose of this standard, OAT refers to both full agonist opioid medications and partial opioid agonist or antagonist medication options for OUD (e.g., buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone®), buprenorphine extended-release injection (Sublocade®), buprenorphine implant (Probuphine®) or naltrexone (Revia®)) for OUD treatment.

Opioid use disorder (OUD): a medical condition defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition, text revision (DSM-5-TR) by a problematic pattern of opioid use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress characterized by the presence within a twelve (12)-month period of at least two (2) of the specific criteria listed in the DSM-5-TR.

Regulated health professional: for the purpose of this standard, a regulated member, under the *Health Professions Act*, who is authorized by an Act of the Legislature of Alberta or an Act of Parliament to prescribe a Schedule 1 drug.

Rural or remote location: for the purpose of this standard, a clinical practice location outside an urban center where patients have limited access to pharmacy services because of travel distance, pharmacy hours or availability of the medication).

Written order: in accordance with the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, an order issued directing that a drug be sold to the regulated health professional named in the written order.

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STANDARD

1. A regulated member **may only** use a written order to obtain medications for the purpose of providing Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT) to patients in accordance with legislation, regulations, Ministerial Orders and CPSA *Standards of Practice*.

2. A regulated member **may only** use a written order to provide OAT:

   a. if they are registered and in good standing with the Tracked Prescription Program (TPP Alberta) and comply with TPP Alberta's program expectations for prescribers

   b. if they have CPSA OAT initiation approval **and** approval from CPSA to issue written orders for the provision of OAT; and

   c. in rural or remote locations with limited access to pharmacy services; and

   d. if they have the capability to have medication dispensing information entered into PIN in real time (e.g., Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system with access to PIN, established process where a pharmacy enters the patient-specific dispensing information into PIN, etc.).

3. A regulated member who uses a written order to provide OAT **must f**ollow CPSA's *Prescribing: Administration* standard of practice, including checking PIN before administering OAT, ensuring the written order is accurate, legible and includes the following:

   a. date written order is issued;

   b. medication name, formulation and quantity ordered;

   c. prescribing physician's name;

   d. prescribing physician's:

      i. address and telephone number; **and**

      ii. registration number;

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e. name and address of the clinic where the office supply will be stored and used; and

f. direct authorization by valid signature (handwritten or digitally captured) that enables the dispenser to verify its authenticity.

4. A regulated member **may only** order quantities and in intervals determined in the CPSA OAT written order approval process.

5. A regulated member using a written order to provide OAT in a rural or remote location **must** also provide a naloxone kit at the first encounter with the patient and as clinically indicated in any subsequent encounters.

6. A regulated member who uses a written order to maintain office supply for the provision of OAT **must:**

   a. ensure that there is a clear and confidential reconciliation process in the clinic for the tracking of the medication office supply;

   b. review and document the medication office supply regularly for quality assurance purposes; and

   c. store OAT medications in a metal safe that is secured in place and equipped with a time-delay lock.

7. A regulated member **must** document the administration of office supply medications in the patient's record, including:

   a. patient's full name, date of birth, and personal health number (PHN);

   b. date of administration;

   c. medication name, dose, formulation, route and quantity administered;

   d. prescribing physician's name; and

   e. name of staff who administered the medication (if different from prescriber).

8. A regulated member **must** ensure that the patient has completed an appropriate in-clinic observation period after administration, and document any adverse reactions observed following administration.

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9. A regulated member **must** ensure that all OAT medications administered by a written order for office use are entered in real-time into PIN.

RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- *Patient Record Content*
- *Patient Record Retention*
- *Prescribing: Administration*
- *Prescribing: Drugs Associated with Substance Use Disorder or Substance-Related Harms*
- *Safe Prescribing for Opioid Use Disorder*

COMPANION RESOURCES

- CPSA Advice to the Profession documents:
  - Prescribing: Administration
  - Prescribing: Drugs Associated with Substance Use Disorder or Substance-Related Harms
  - Safe Prescribing for Opioid Use Disorder
- CPSA Advice to Albertans documents:
  - Safe Prescribing for Opioid Use Disorder
- CPSA's Prescribing Tools & Resources

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REFERENCES

Alberta College of Pharmacy's *Standards for the Operation of Licensed Pharmacies* (Feb. 2025).
Government of Alberta's *Bill 29: Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026* (n.d.).
Government of Alberta's *Health Professions Act* (July 2026).
Government of Alberta's *Pharmacy and Drug Act* (Dec. 2025).

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