

PRESCRIBING POLICIES:

4.11.1 METHADONE and BUPRENORPHINE/NALOXONE (Suboxone®)
CONTROL PROGRAM – DAY/WEEKEND PASS MEDICATIONS (VGH)

POLICY

1. **For pain management (Methadone only):**
 - i. VGH pharmacy will supply pass medication provided.
 - ii. Order must be written by physician with methadone prescribing privileges.
 - iii. A 24-hour notice is required for processing the pass medication.

2. **For addiction management:**
 - a. **Methadone**
 - i. VGH pharmacy will **NOT** provide pass med for addiction therapy as daily witnessed ingestion is required.
 - ii. Physician with methadone prescribing privileges for addiction therapy may write order on an outpatient triplicate prescription and arrange to have patient fill the medication from a community pharmacy on a daily basis for duration of the pass.
 - b. **Buprenorphine/naloxone: Daily Witnessed Ingestion required***
 - i. VGH pharmacy will **NOT** provide pass medication.
 - ii. Physician with buprenorphine/naloxone prescribing privileges for addiction therapy may write order on an outpatient triplicate prescription and arrange to have patient fill the medication from a community pharmacy on a daily basis for the duration of the pass
 - c. **Buprenorphine/naloxone: Daily Witnessed Ingestion not required***
 - i. VGH pharmacy will supply pass medication provided.
 - ii. Order must be written by physician with buprenorphine/naloxone prescribing privileges.
 - iii. A 24-hour notice is required for processing the pass medication.

* Prescriber is responsible for ensuring the requirement for Daily Witnessed Ingestion (i.e. for the first two months or until stability is established) is no longer required.

PROCEDURES (FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT ONLY)

- Physician: 1. Write order for the methadone pass at least 24 hours prior to the pass.
- Nurse: **FOR ALL WARDS:**
1. Send a copy of physician's order to Pharmacy indicating time the patient is leaving on pass. Ensure that the number of doses required is indicated.
- Pharmacist: 1. Process the prescription on the computer system as a specific order for duration of the pass. Ensure the dosing instructions and brand name or manufacturer appears on the label. (See PCIS manual.)
2. For outpatient pain management, methadone does not need to be diluted in Tang. Ensure that the strength of the solution and volume of drug per dose is clearly labelled.