

August 23, 2016

Dear Community provider,

I am a provider at MaineGeneral and writing today in order to ask for your help with our drug addiction treatment program. As you may know, patients come to us for Intensive Outpatient Treatment (IOP) for their substance abuse.

After completing the program they will often stay with us for Opiate Maintenance Treatment. This was designed to provide medication for up to one year. For many patients, Suboxone treatment is very effective during this time. However, it has become harder to transfer patients to another Suboxone prescriber as there are currently so few. What this means is that we are unable to take new people into the IOP if we cannot reduce the numbers. As we must allow anyone to attend our program if they want, the consequence of this is that we will need to stop prescribing for patients who have not fully completed their treatment.

This is where you come in. We need as many of you to be certified to prescribe Suboxone as possible. Also, please be aware that the new law passed and signed a few weeks ago allows midlevel practitioners to prescribe buprenorphine to treat addiction. There are some conditions, but these are easily addressed. If your practice is able to accept your own patients back after IOP in order to complete their treatments, I implore you to do so. We promise to transfer only stable patients, but who need to finish what they started. If at any point you have doubts, encounter difficult-to-treat or relapse, we will offer advice or take them back.

To become certified to prescribe Suboxone, you must attend a training session. The next will be held on Friday, September 30, from 8:00am to 12:30pm at Thayer in Waterville. To register, contact Malindi Thompson from MaineGeneral Prevention & Healthy Living at malindi.thompson@mainegeneral.org

Following the class there is another, given by Alane O'Connor from Maine Dartmouth Family Practice, who is the director of their treatment program and who specializes in treating pregnant women addicted to opiates. She is offering a complete class on "How to Do It" to help staff set up Suboxone treatment programs at their own practice.

Both classes are open to anyone wishing to learn more, including NPs, PAs, MAs, and other practice staff or managers.

If you are interested but cannot make this next training, contact us anyway. Additional trainings will be available on future dates. Please don't miss out on this opportunity to become a part of the recovery community. They need you. As do we.

Richard Fein, D.O.