

Buprenorphine Prescribing

Buprenorphine (Subutex®) is a substitution medication for the treatment of Opioid Dependence Disorder. This medication will soon be available in Canada as another choice for physicians and patients in the treatment of this addiction.

As a requirement to market this medication in Canada, Schering Canada has developed a training program for physicians who want to prescribe this medication. The College has expressed concerns that this single requirement is not sufficient to ensure competency to prescribe this

medication. Furthermore, there is no requirement for ongoing education. Treating addictions is not without risk to patients and there are some risks associated with the medication itself.

As a result, at its February 2, 2006, meeting, Council determined that additional requirements for prescribing buprenorphine are required. In order to prescribe buprenorphine, physicians registered in Alberta must fulfill the following conditions:

1. hold an exemption to prescribe methadone;
2. have attended the buprenorphine training course and provide evidence of successful completion; and
3. provide evidence of ongoing training in the treatment of addictions consistent with the requirements to prescribe methadone.

Information on buprenorphine prescribing requirements is available on the College's methadone program web page at www.cpsa.ab.ca/collegeprograms/methadone_program.asp.

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