

# HHS issues guidelines expanding access to buprenorphine treatment

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(HealthDay)—Eligible practitioners who are licensed and registered to

prescribe controlled substances are now exempt from certain statutory certification requirements related to training, counseling, and other ancillary services for prescribing buprenorphine, according to guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Noting that addressing perceived barriers around prescribing buprenorphine by exempting practitioners from specific certification requirements may increase the availability of medication-based opioid use disorder treatment and help address barriers to care, the HHS issued [practice guidelines](#) relating to this exemption.

According to the guidelines, under certain conditions, eligible physicians, physician assistants, [nurse practitioners](#), clinical nurse specialists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and certified nurse midwives can be exempted from the certification requirements to expand access to buprenorphine. The exemption applies to state-licensed and Drug Enforcement Administration-registered practitioners and allows these practitioners to treat up to 30 patients with [opioid use disorder](#) using buprenorphine without having to undertake training-related certifications. Practitioners are limited to treating up to 30 patients at any one time; those who do not wish to practice under the exemption and with the 30-patient limit may seek a waiver per established protocols. The exemption applies to prescription of specific Schedule III, IV, and V medications, including buprenorphine, and does not apply to use of Schedule II medications, such as methadone.

"These guidelines provide another tool to help communities respond to the evolving overdose crisis, equipping providers to save lives in their communities," Rachel Levine, M.D., the assistant secretary for health, said in a statement.

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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