

HCS SUBJECT-FACING MATERIALS FOR NEW HHS BUPRENORPHINE GUIDELINE

Appendix A: Initial Email Invitation for State Agencies:

Subject Line: Seeking information on new HHS buprenorphine guidelines for providers

Dear [enter name],

My name is [enter full name] and I am working with researchers who are part of the NIH-funded [HEALing Communities Study](#). We want to learn if states will be following the new HHS buprenorphine guidance to ease barriers among eligible providers for obtaining a 30-patient waiver to provide buprenorphine treatment for opioid use disorder.

The HHS released new buprenorphine practice guidelines on April 28, 2021 (<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-08961>) announcing an exemption specifically for waiver-eligible providers (i.e., physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and certified nurse midwives) applying for the 30-patient limit. Specifically, eligible providers would no longer be required 1) to complete the waiver training course that was 8-hours for physicians and 24-hours for non-physicians (note: prescribers still need to apply to receive a waiver) and 2) to attest that they have the capacity to refer patients to counseling, and other ancillary services. This is a policy change aimed at improving access to FDA approved buprenorphine treatment for opioid use disorder that has been shown to decrease mortality. We are hoping you can answer a few questions to help us determine if states will adopt this new guidance. We are only collecting information on state policies and regulations and we will not ask you for any personally identifying information."

Please reply to this email with your answers to the following questions. If you would prefer to speak to me or someone from the research team, please email [insert email address] or call [insert phone number]. If you are not the correct person to supply this information, please let me know or forward this email to the individual that is.

1. Does [**name of the state agency or medical or nursing board**] currently require waiver training to prescribe buprenorphine for the 30-patient limit? [Please check the box or place an X next to the answer]

Yes

If yes, can you please share document or link?

No

Do Not Know

N/A

Is there someone else who can help answer this question?

Yes – Can you please provide their name and contact info?

No

Do Not Know

2. Does [**name of the state agency or medical or nursing board**] currently require waived providers with the 30-patient limit to have the ability/capacity to refer patients

on buprenorphine for counseling or ancillary services as needed? [Please check the box or place an X next to the answer]

Yes

If yes, can you please share document or link?

No

Do Not Know

N/A

Is there someone else who can help answer these questions?

Yes – Can you please provide their name and contact info?

No

Do not know

3. Is **[name of the state agency or medical or nursing board]** discussing the new HHS guidelines? [Please check the box or place an X next to the answer]

Yes

Do these discussions include additional training requirements? Please explain.

[Share link and document, if available]

No

Do Not Know

Meeting planned for discussion

Discussions are ongoing

Decisions are made but cannot yet share

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

[Name

Address

Phone

Email address]

[Insert appropriate HEAL graphic identifier(s) here]

[*Site Optional*: Insert institutional logo here]

APPENDIX B: Follow-up Email for State Agencies

[Please respond back to the initial email for follow up]

Subject Line: Follow – up: Seeking information on new HHS buprenorphine guidelines for providers

Dear [enter name],

I am following up on the email below to learn whether **[name of the State]** will be following the new HHS buprenorphine guidance to ease barriers among eligible providers for obtaining a 30-patient waiver to provide buprenorphine treatment for opioid use disorder.

I appreciate your time and assistance. If you are not the correct person to supply this information, please let me know or forward this email to the individual that is. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Name
Address
Phone
Email address]

[Insert appropriate HEAL graphic identifier(s) here]
[Site Optional: Insert Institutional logo here]

APPENDIX C: Telephone Invitation for State Agencies

Good morning/afternoon.

My name is **[say full name]** and I am working with researchers who are part of the NIH-funded HEALing Communities Study. I am trying to reach **[insert name and title]** to learn if **[insert name of agency]** will be allowing **[insert name of state]** their providers to follow the new Department of Health and Human Services buprenorphine guidance designed to improve access to buprenorphine treatment for opioid use disorder. Do you have about 10 minutes to answer a few questions?

If NO –

When is a good day and time for you?

If YES –

Thank you. [Proceed with the script below.]

I first want to share the details of this new federal change. HHS released new buprenorphine practice guidelines on April 28, 2021, announcing an exemption from the certification requirements for physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and certified nurse midwives related to training, counseling, and other ancillary services. The exemption does two things. First, it allows the clinicians to treat up to 30 patients using buprenorphine without having to complete the 8-hour (for physicians) or 24-hour (for non-physicians) waiver training for their x-waiver. Please note that prescribers still need to apply to receive a waiver. Second, it allows practitioners applying for the 30-patient limit waiver to treat patients with buprenorphine without certifying that they have the capacity to refer to counseling and ancillary services.

So, now I want to ask you a few questions about your state laws and regulations for buprenorphine providers. We are only collecting information on state policies and regulations and we will not ask you for any personally identifying information."

1. Does **[name of the state agency or medical or nursing board]** currently require waiver training to prescribe buprenorphine for the 30-patient limit?

Yes

If yes, can you please share document or link?

No

Do Not Know

N/A

Is there someone else who can help answer these questions?

Yes – Can you please provide their name and contact information?

No

Do Not Know

2. Does **[name of the state agency or medical or nursing board]** currently require waived providers with the 30-patient limit to have the ability/capacity to refer patients on buprenorphine for counseling or ancillary services as needed?

Yes

If yes, can you please share document or link?

No

Do Not Know

N/A

Is there someone else who can help answer these questions?

Yes – Can you please provide their name and contact info?

No

Do not know

3. Is **[name of the state agency or medical or nursing board]** discussing the new HHS guidelines?

Yes

Do these discussions include additional training requirements? Please explain.
[Share link and document, if available]

No

Do Not Know

Meeting planned for discussion

Discussions are ongoing

Decisions are made but cannot yet share

Thank you. I really appreciate your time and the information you've provided. Do you have any questions? *[Take note of the question, and if the answer is unknown to you, tell them that you will get back to them after talking with the investigators.]*

[If there is any potential misunderstanding, the caller should add (a) details of the misunderstanding in the free text box field, (b) indicate whether SAMHSA link to FAQs (<https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/practitioner-resources/faqs>) was provided, and (c) indicate whether further follow-up is needed in the appropriate field in the Excel document:

The new practice guidance has a “Frequently Asked Questions” document that may help explain this more – there are some clarifications provided by SAMHSA, “FAQs About the New Buprenorphine Practice Guidelines” at <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/practitioner-resources/faqs>. I can pull this up now and we can take a look to see if your issue/questions are in here. If it is not, I would recommend that you reach out to Patti Juliana at patti.juliana@samhsa.hhs.gov.]

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX D: Voicemail Script:

Good morning/afternoon **[say name of the person you are reaching out]**. My name is **[say full name]** and I am working with researchers who are part of the NIH-funded HEALing Communities Study. I am calling to try to reach **[insert name of person/their title]** in order to learn if **[say name of the board or agency]** will be adopting the new federal HHS buprenorphine guidance making it easier for eligible providers to get a x-waiver and treat up to 30 patients with buprenorphine for opioid use disorder. If you can call me back at **[say your phone number]**, I would appreciate it. Once again, my name is **[say full name]** and my number is **[say your phone number]**.

OR

Hello, my name is **[insert name]** and I work for the **[insert research site]**. Please call or email me back at **[insert preferred phone or email]** at your earliest convenience. Thank you and have a great day.