



Access to Meds to Treat Drug Addiction Is Vastly Limited

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Because of restrictions of Medicaid programs and insurance companies, medications to treat addiction to opiates are often inaccessible to those who need them, MedPage Today reports. The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) released a 216-page report on this issue, which is critical to the HIV epidemic because injection drug use is a major contributing factor to the virus's spread. (Heroin, for example, is an opiate.)

The report found that access to these prescription treatments varies widely between state Medicaid programs, with just 28 covering all three of the medications Probuphine (buprenorphine), methadone and Vivitrol (naltrexone); all are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Forty-two state Medicaid programs require prior authorization for buprenorphine. Many of the programs also impose coverage limits for lifetime benefits.

The report finds that there are similar restrictions on treatment coverage among private insurance companies and that coverage is sparse for such drugs as Suboxone (buprenorphine/naloxone) and injectable naltrexone.

Congress also imposes limits on the number of patients a clinician can treat at one time. Furthermore, the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 requires that care providers obtain a special Drug Enforcement Administration waiver to prescribe certain drugs to treat opioid addiction.

To read the MedPage Today report, [click here](#).

To read the ASAM report, [click here](#).

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