



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

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www.nyc.gov/health

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Please distribute to all clinical staff and administrators, including those in Primary Care, Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Pediatrics, Emergency Care, Employee/Occupational Health, and social work and psychology.

Buprenorphine: An Office-Based Treatment for Opioid Dependence

Dear Colleagues:

The New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) has issued a new edition of City Health Information (CHI), entitled: " Buprenorphine: An Office-Based Treatment for Opioid Dependence." This is the April 2008 issue of the monthly CHI publication, which is written for the medical community in NYC. If you are a CHI subscriber, you will receive a hard copy of this publication in the mail soon.

Addiction to narcotic pain relievers and heroin (opioids) is a major health problem in the United States (US). Rates of abuse and dependence for opioid pain relievers such as Vicodin® (hydrocodone bitartrate and acetaminophen) and OxyContin® (oxycodone HCl controlled-release) have increased during the past several years, and opioids are now second only to marijuana as drugs of abuse. However, fewer than 20% of Americans who are dependent on opioids are in drug treatment programs. In addition, drug overdose is one of the leading causes of death in NYC. In 2006, more than 900 people died of drug overdoses in NYC; heroin and other opioids were involved in the majority of these deaths.

Buprenorphine is the only approved office-based treatment for opioid dependence. This makes treatment for opioid dependence more readily available, and patients can have their buprenorphine prescriptions filled at a pharmacy. Opioid addiction treatment in a primary care setting also allows for increased clinical attention to other health conditions among opioid-dependent individuals.

The key messages of the CHI are:

- Opioid dependence is a significant public health problem and is increasing due to growing abuse of opioid pain medication.
- Buprenorphine is an effective treatment for opioid dependence.
- Primary care physicians can initiate and manage opioid-dependence treatment.

This report is available in the HAN Document Library on the HAN Web site, and at the following Web site: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/chi/chi.shtml>. We have also attached the report as a PDF file.

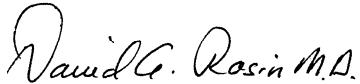
Hard-copy continuing medical education (CME) activities related to this report are available.

City Health Information has been published by the NYC DOHMH since 1982 to communicate public health

information to the NYC health care community. The DOHMH produces 10-12 issues a year, focusing on timely public health topics. CHIs include: descriptive data; data analysis; practice guidelines; reports from DOHMH; federal, state, and local mandates; and helpful resources, as well as CME and CNE activities.

For information about these activities, please visit: www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cme/chicme.shtml

If you wish to be added to the CHI subscriber list, e-mail us at: nycdohrp@health.health.nyc.gov or call 212-676-2188. For an e-mail subscription, visit the CHI Web site at: www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/chi/chi.shtml.



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Categories of urgency levels for NYC DOHMH Broadcast Notification System:

Health Alert—conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention. Health Advisory—provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action. Health Update—provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action