

Addressing the Toxic Drug Supply Crisis: Diversifying OUD Treatment Options

Communities across the province face growing risks due to the potency and toxicity of the illegal drug supply. People are turning to leaders like you for actionable solutions. Recognizing the urgent need for diversified opioid use disorder treatment, our team engaged stakeholders to build on existing strengths and identify effective, actionable strategies. We conducted extensive fieldwork, collaborating with healthcare providers, clients, and other stakeholders, to uncover how injectable and oral OAT programs in BC engage and keep clients connected to care. We identified four core elements to diversifying opioid use disorder (OUD) care: 1) **flexible care delivery**, 2) **responsiveness to clients' needs**, 3) **supporting social capital**, and 4) **offering a spectrum of medications and formulations**. This document is provided as a distillation of our findings and should be interpreted in the context of the full report, available at: bit.ly/foatKThub.

Here is what you can do. This checklist distills our findings and research into actionable steps that your health authority can take today to create a system of care that supports everyone, everywhere:

Ensure Equitable Access to a Spectrum of Medications

- Collaborate with MMHA and MoH to streamline access to a range of medications and formulations, including injectable OAT and prescribed alternatives. Facilitate procurement, distribution, and regulatory compliance with clinics for these medications
- Equip programs with the necessary infrastructure, training, staff, and resources
- Collaborate with MoH to retrofit sites for inhalation of medications meeting air exchange and WorkSafeBC requirements. Provide logistical support for filter collection and disposal

Support Practice Change

- Assist programs in developing partnership agreements with regulatory colleges, MoH, and MMHA, and piloting new care approaches for OUD (e.g., iOAT deliveries, prescribed alternatives, take-home doses)
- Ensure agreements provide programs with the necessary support and protections to innovate safely
- Create regional training, education, and knowledge sharing opportunities for providers to encourage best practices, use of emerging evidence, and innovation

Facilitate Flexible Treatment Delivery Methods

- Fund and support programs to offer diversified OUD medications and formulations from various locations, including community pharmacies, supportive housing, community-based organizations, and through virtual care
- Develop operational guidance and provide liaisons to support implementation and regulatory compliance. Ensure this guidance supports prescribers and pharmacists to dispense medications in ways that allow individuals to pursue work, school, or other recovery-supportive activities, including providing take-home doses (where indicated) and facilitating medication deliveries

Develop Flexible Funding Models

- Work with MMHA to create funding models that enable sites to offer comprehensive supports, addressing needs such as food security, hygiene support, outreach, and recreational and employment programming

We recognize that these actions are complex and there are additional considerations, rules, and regulations that influence what you can do. Our team is committed to collaborating to understand these nuances and to facilitate the implementation of these approaches. We are eager to meet with you to discuss these matters further and work together towards effective solutions.