



# FACT SHEET

## Nurse Practitioners (NPs) Prescribing Methadone for Opioid Dependence

Currently, in Newfoundland and Labrador, NPs have authority to prescribe Controlled Drugs and Substances, including authorizing the use of cannabis for medical purposes. NPs do not have authority to prescribe diacetylmorphine (heroin), opium, coca leaves and anabolic steroids except testosterone.

### Change in NP Scope of Practice: Education and Practice Requirements for NPs to Prescribe Methadone

On October 20, 2017, the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (ARNNL) Council approved a change in the scope of NP practice and designated Buprenorphine-Naloxone (Suboxone) and Methadone as drugs NPs, who meet the specified practice and education requirements, may prescribe for the treatment of opioid dependence or pain management as deemed appropriate for a specific client. NPs must complete ALL of the identified education and practice requirements to prescribe Methadone for Opioid Dependence as specified below **AND** receive authorization from ARNNL.

### Requirements for NPs to Prescribe Methadone for Opioid Dependence:

On March 21, 2018, the Government of Canada published regulatory amendments that change the way Methadone is regulated under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA)* and the *Narcotic Control Regulations (NCR)*. These amendments allow practitioners to prescribe, administer, sell and provide Methadone without applying for and obtaining an exemption under subsection 56(1) of the CDSA. This is for both the treatment of opioid use disorders and for analgesia. These amendments came into effect May 19, 2018: [www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2018/2018-03-21/html/sor-dors37-eng.html](http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2018/2018-03-21/html/sor-dors37-eng.html)

Nurse Practitioners who prescribe Methadone for opioid dependence must have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and judgement to do so, including the following:

- Be currently registered as an NP with authority (without restrictions) to prescribe controlled drugs and substances.
- Meet all standards in the current version of the standards for nurse practitioner practice.
- Practice using evidence – informed best practice guidelines and resources.
- Complete the training for the Provincial Government's Tamper Resistant Prescription Drug Pad Program and adhere to the ongoing practice requirements of the program: [www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/prescription/hcp\\_tamperresistantdrugpad.html](http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/prescription/hcp_tamperresistantdrugpad.html).
- Be registered with the Pharmacy Network (i.e., have access through Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information HEALTHe NL viewer) and review a patient's current medication profile. NPs are required to use the new Tamper Resistant Prescription Pads as of **June 30th, 2018**.
- Provide patient education and/or other relevant education/services as deemed appropriate related to opioid dependence and document same.
- Participate in the Provincial Prescription Monitoring Program implemented January 1, 2018.
- Undertake ongoing continuing education in opioid dependence and/or addiction disorders. NPs are required to complete the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) *Opioid Dependence Treatment Certificate Program* or a course/educational program deemed equivalent by ARNNL as part of continuing education in opioid dependence within three years of being granted authority to prescribe Methadone for opioid dependence.

Before being granted the authority to prescribe Methadone for opioid dependence by ARNNL, NPs must complete the following additional requirements:

- 1) NPs must apply in writing to ARNNL, indicating:
  - A request to be granted authority to prescribe Methadone for opioid dependence in their practice setting with rationale for the request.
  - Complete the application form: Authority to Prescribe Methadone for Opioid Dependence and submit to ARNNL (form available at: <https://www.arnnl.ca/registration-forms>).
  - Written Confirmation of employer support and policies for the NP to prescribe Methadone for opioid dependence in their practice setting. The NP must have policies in place to guide their practice related to prescribing Methadone and

care of the client receiving Methadone for opioid dependence.

- Access to a mentor who has expertise in prescribing Methadone for opioid dependence.
  - Attend a minimum of two days of clinical training (or a combination of equivalent hours) with an experienced methadone provider/team.
- 2) Complete the CAMH *Opioid Dependence Treatment (ODT) Core Course* or a course/educational program deemed equivalent by ARNNL. This course requires a one-day face to face workshop out of province and completion of five self-paced online modules.
  - 3) Complete the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador's (CPSNL's) *Introduction to Safe Prescribing: Opioids, Benzodiazepines, and Stimulants Course*. Available through [www.mdcme.ca](http://www.mdcme.ca).
  - 4) Be knowledgeable of the current version of the CPSNL's *Methadone Maintenance Treatment Standards and Guidelines* document.
  - 5) Be knowledgeable of the current version of the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board's (NLPB's) *Standards for the Safe and Effective Provision of Medication for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence*.
  - 6) Consult more experienced prescribers of Methadone, when necessary, to enhance their knowledge and ensure patient safety as needed during induction or re-induction after missed doses.
  - 7) Have access to an established program for the regular testing of patients receiving Methadone for drugs of possible abuse.

**For NPs who are practicing outside of an RHA, the NP must follow ALL of the requirements detailed above along with:**

- Identify a mentor who may be different than their collaborating physician and who has expertise in addictions management and/or substance use disorders and expertise in prescribing Methadone.
- Submit to ARNNL policies that guide their practice in relation to prescribing Methadone and care of the client receiving Methadone for opioid dependence.

**Application Process Requirements:**

- NPs must complete the Methadone for Opioid Dependence form and submit to ARNNL. NPs can access the Methadone for Opioid Dependence form at <https://www.arnnl.ca/registration-forms> or by accessing Registration Forms under the Registration Services/Fees section of Registration & Renewal on ARNNL's website.
- NPs are required to submit certificate(s) of completion to ARNNL registration.
  - Once the application is reviewed and deemed to have met all requirements, the NP will be granted authority by ARNNL to prescribe Methadone for opioid dependence.
  - The NP will receive a letter from ARNNL confirming authority to prescribe Methadone for opioid dependence.
  - An ARNNL website notification of authorized prescribers will be posted under 'Member Search'.

An NP can apply simultaneously to seek authority to prescribe Suboxone and Methadone after they have completed all specified education and practice requirements should they choose but each (Suboxone, Methadone for analgesia or Methadone for opioid dependence) require a separate application.

**PLEASE NOTE: These processes are subject to change, therefore NPs must validate the most up-to-date processes via the Nurse Practitioner page under Registration and Renewal on ARNNL's website (<https://www.arnnl.ca/nurse-practitioner>).**

**About ARNNL:**

The Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (ARNNL) is the regulatory body for all Registered Nurses (RNs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) in the province. ARNNL's professional association role is to promote activities to advance healthy public policy. ARNNL advances nursing excellence for public protection and optimal health of the Newfoundland and Labrador population. ARNNL exists so that there will be: Public Confidence in Self-Regulation; Accountable Professionals; and Evolution of the Profession.

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