



# FACT SHEET

## Nurse Practitioners (NPs) Prescribing Buprenorphine - Naloxone (Suboxone)

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 Buprenorphine-Naloxone (Suboxone)

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 Suboxone as specified below **AND** receive authorization from ARNNL.

### Requirements for NPs to Prescribe Buprenorphine-Naloxone (Suboxone):

Nurse Practitioners who prescribe Suboxone must have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and judgement to do so, including the following:

- Be currently licensed as an NP with authority (without restrictions) to prescribe controlled drugs and substances (CDS).
- 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.
- 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. NPs are required to use the new Tamper Resistant Prescription Pads as of **June 30th, 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 Suboxone.

Before being granted the authority to prescribe Buprenorphine-Naloxone (Suboxone), NPs must complete the following additional requirements:

- 1) NPs must apply in writing to ARNNL, indicating:
  - A request to be granted authority to prescribe Buprenorphine-Naloxone (Suboxone) in their practice setting with rationale for the request.
  - Complete the application form: Authority to Prescribe Suboxone and submit to ARNNL.
  - Written confirmation of employer support and policies for the NP to prescribe Buprenorphine-Naloxone in their practice setting. The NP must have policies in place to guide their practice related to prescribing Suboxone and care of clients receiving Suboxone.
  - Access to a mentor who has expertise in addictions management and/or substance use disorders and expertise in prescribing of Buprenorphine - Naloxone (Suboxone).

- 2) Complete the online *Suboxone education program on the prescribing of Buprenorphine – Naloxone (Suboxone)* - available at [www.suboxonecme.ca](http://www.suboxonecme.ca) or a course/educational program deemed equivalent by ARNNL.
- 3) Complete the CAMH *Buprenorphine-Assisted Treatment of Opioid Dependence*: An online course for front-line clinicians or a course/educational program deemed equivalent by ARNNL.
- 4) Complete the College of Physicians & 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).
- 5) Attend a minimum of two days of clinical training (or a combination of equivalent hours) with an experienced Buprenorphine – Naloxone (Suboxone) prescriber/team.
- 6) Complete the CAMH *Opioid Dependence Treatment (ODT) Core Course* (or a course/educational program deemed equivalent by ARNNL) within 18 months of being granted authority to prescribe Suboxone. This course requires a one-day face to face workshop out of province and completion of five self-paced online modules.
- 7) Be knowledgeable of the current version of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador's (CPSNL's) *Methadone Maintenance Treatment Standards and Guidelines* document.
- 8) Be knowledgeable of the current version of the Newfoundland and Labrador's Pharmacy Board's (NLPB's) *Standards for the Safe and Effective Provision of Medication for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence*.
- 9) Consult more experienced prescribers of Suboxone, when necessary, to enhance their knowledge and ensure patient safety as needed during induction or re-induction after missed doses.
- 10) Have access to an established program for the regular testing of patients receiving Buprenorphine-Naloxone (Suboxone) for drugs of possible abuse.

**NPs who are practicing outside of a 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 Buprenorphine – Naloxone (Suboxone).
- Submit to ARNNL policies that guide their practice in relation to prescribing Suboxone and care of the clients receiving Suboxone.

**Application Process Requirements:**

- NPs must complete the Suboxone Application form and submit to ARNNL. NPs can access the Buprenorphine - Naloxone (Suboxone) application form at <https://www.arnnl.ca/registration-forms> or by accessing registration forms under the Registration and Renewal tab on ARNNL's website: [www.arnnl.ca](http://www.arnnl.ca) under Nurse Practitioner and then the Registration Forms section of the webpage
- NPs will be required to submit certificate(s) of completion to ARNNL .
  - ◇ Once the application is reviewed and deemed to have met all requirements, the NP will be granted authority by ARNNL to prescribe Buprenorphine - Naloxone (Suboxone).
  - ◇ The NP will receive a letter from ARNNL confirming authority to prescribe Suboxone has been granted.
  - ◇ 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](#) webpage under Registration and Renewal on ARNNL's website.**

**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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