

# Opioid Substitution Therapy

## Canterbury COVID-19 Guidelines



The following protocol has been developed as we believe it is vital community pharmacies remain open as much as possible during the COVID-19 outbreak and to minimise the risk of community spread of COVID-19, both to at-risk patients (which will be many of our OST patients) and to community pharmacists.

The variations to usual practice will mean that community pharmacists will be able to spread the presentations for OST across the week.

### Christchurch Opioid Recovery Service (CORS) patients

- The team at the CORS have reviewed each of their patient's takeaway arrangements with a view to reduce pharmacy contacts and dispensing.
- CORS invite pharmacists, via the form attached, to propose alternate takeaway arrangements if they wish. These will be reviewed at daily CORS multi-disciplinary team meetings.
- Prescriptions are now being annotated to allow pharmacists to use their discretion around which days takeaways will occur.
- Prescription alteration forms have been faxed to pharmacies for prescriptions that are currently active with "x amount of takeaways per week, non consecutive or no more than 2 consecutive at pharmacists discretion".
- Please note that as specific days are not being specified for takeaways, this will increase the risk of patients being able to double dose if attending more than one pharmacy.
- Pharmacies with larger numbers will be assigned a single point of contact (case manager). If you are one of these pharmacies this person will be in touch in the next few days.

### Shared Care (GP Authority) patients

- Generally, shared care patients will continue to have four takeaways per week.
- There are some exceptions for patients:
  - that have had repeated history of diversion or injecting takeaways
  - that have exceptional circumstances (not related to COVID) who may have up to five
- If GPs/Pharmacists have not received communication regarding this, they can contact one of the Shared Care case managers ([Debbie.Killick@cdhb.health.nz](mailto:Debbie.Killick@cdhb.health.nz), [Shelley.Higgins@cdhb.health.nz](mailto:Shelley.Higgins@cdhb.health.nz), or [Andrea.Connor@cdhb.health.nz](mailto:Andrea.Connor@cdhb.health.nz)).

### GP Care patients

- We advise and enable once weekly pick up, i.e. six takeaways.
- We realize that this will not be appropriate for some patients and wish to enable community pharmacists to use their discretion to apply this guidance.
- To enable this, GP Care scripts should be annotated with:  
"Variation as per COVID-19 Guidelines"
- These guidelines will apply to scripts that have already been written, so **there is NO need to re-write** current scripts.

**There will be a strict 'no replacement' policy for lost/stolen takeaways that patients will need to be made aware of.**

### Patients that are unable to pick up doses due to sickness

- CORS and shared care patients that are too sick to come in and pick up their OST must ring CORS. Where possible, CORS will facilitate the patient nominating a trusted person to pick up on the patient's behalf
- GP Care patients must ring their GP team who will authorise someone else to pick up on their behalf.

### Pharmacies Dispensing OST

- It is essential that you complete and return the attached form to the CORS/Shared Care via **fax number 03 335 4351** so dispensing can be better coordinated.
- We also need this to enable us to redirect your OST patients to another pharmacy in the event you are unable to open.