



Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

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December 14, 2021

Dear Colleague:

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), Division of Pharmacologic Therapies (DPT) reviews and approves requests for patient exceptions under the Federal Opioid Treatment Regulations [42 CFR § 8.12 (i)]. In response to requests for the upcoming federal holidays and ensuing weekends (December 24th, 25th, and 26th and December 31st, Jan 1st, and Jan 2nd), this letter is to provide guidance regarding requests for unsupervised doses of medication for patients for these dates. In general, the following is subject to state law and State Opioid Treatment Authority (SOTA) approval.

Program-wide requests for exceptions for the observance of these federal holidays and ensuing weekends may be submitted via the Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) extranet. In the comments section of the form, please specify the arrangements for patients not receiving unsupervised doses. Also, in the comment section, please provide the total number of patients for which you are seeking an exception request. Attached is a sample holiday closure submission. OTP medical directors are reminded that appropriate alternative arrangements for medication continuity need to be made for patients in whom therapeutic benefits of unsupervised doses of medication do not outweigh safety risks.

In addition, as a reminder, SAMHSA's OTP Guidance issued March 16, 2020, allowed states to request a blanket exception for all stable patients in an OTP to receive up to 28 days of unsupervised doses of medication and up to 14 days of unsupervised doses of medication for patients who are less stable but who the OTP medical director believes can safely handle. OTPs in states that did not request this exception are expected to adhere to the federal regulatory criteria for unsupervised doses and request exceptions on behalf of all patients for dates when the clinic is closed.

Sincerely,

/Yngvild Olsen/

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Acting Director
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment