Professional Notice

To: Pharmacy Practitioners

From: The Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists

Date: February 22, 2019

Re: Changes to requirements for witnessing buprenorphine/naloxone dosing

The Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists has amended the requirements for witnessed dosing of buprenorphine/naloxone in pharmacies.

The direction for daily witnessed ingestion of buprenorphine/naloxone no longer requires a patient to remain under supervision until the tablet has completely dissolved - a process that can take up to 15 minutes. A patient may now leave the pharmacy once a pharmacy team member has directly observed the dose being self-administered, unless specifically indicated otherwise by the prescriber.

This change is the outcome of a multi-stakeholder meeting convened by Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health, to address the increasing number of pharmacies that are reaching maximum capacity in the number of patients they are able to accommodate. Given that buprenorphine/naloxone is increasingly used as the treatment of choice for opiate use disorder, it was the consensus at the meeting that this change is in the best health interest of patients and the public.

The amended requirement is set out in the NSCP Standards of Practice: Opiate Agonist Maintenance Treatment, Appendix H, section - Witnessed Ingestion.

While every effort has been made to ensure that prescribers are aware of this change, pharmacists are encouraged to discuss this change with OAMT prescribers in their area.