

Professional Notice

To: Pharmacy Practitioners
From: The Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists
Date: June 30, 2022
Re: Prescribing OAT to Bridge Patients Released from Correctional Facilities

Release from a correctional facility is a particularly vulnerable and dangerous time for patients who are receiving opioid agonist therapy (OAT), with higher rates of both fatal and non-fatal overdose within this group. Frequently, individuals are released unexpectedly and without being issued a prescription for OAT. Physicians from Mental Health and Addictions recognize that pharmacists are important care partners and are asking pharmacists to help support this vulnerable population.

Pharmacists can be assured that they have the authority to prescribe OAT, supported by the [Standards of Practice: Prescribing Drugs – Appendix H](#), for patients who are transitioning from correctional facilities to community to support continuity of care until they can be seen by a community OAT provider (usually less than one week).

Pharmacists prescribing for individuals in these circumstances should:

- Confirm the patient's current dose
- Be reasonably assured of when the patient last received a dose
- Provide the medication as daily witnessed ingestion

The NSCP has confirmed with Health Canada that prescribing in these circumstances is consistent with the [Subsection 56\(l\) class exemption for patients, practitioners and pharmacists prescribing and providing controlled substances in Canada](#).

Contact Information for Correction Facilities

Pharmacists can use the following contact information should they need additional information about the individual's OAT treatment.

Cape Breton Correctional Facility – Sydney, NS

- (902) 563-2114
- This facility is serviced by a community pharmacy, so information may also be obtained by consulting the individual's NS DIS record.

Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility – New Glasgow, NS

- (902) 755-5721
- This facility is serviced by a community pharmacy, so information may also be obtained by consulting the individual's NS DIS record.

Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility – Dartmouth, NS

- This facility has its own pharmacy that is run as part of Nova Scotia Health. Pharmacists should contact the nursing unit or the pharmacy at the correctional facility directly, if possible. After hours, pharmacists can contact the pharmacy at the Dartmouth General Hospital.
 - Central Nova Facility Nursing Units – (902) 460-7313 or (902) 460-7315
 - Central Nova Facility Pharmacy – (902) 460-7304 or (902) 460-7305
 - Dartmouth General Pharmacy – (902) 465-8536