

Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) Gap Coverage Program and Extension

On April 1, 2020, the Government of Alberta established the Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) Gap Coverage Program (refer to Benefact Number 852, April 2020). The purpose of this program is to provide immediate, no-cost OAT prescription drugs to Albertans while they secure drug coverage through a health benefits plan. This temporary coverage is for up to 120 days of prescribed therapy and during this time the patient is expected to secure coverage for prescription drugs in a supplementary health benefits program.

Patients can enrol in any health benefits plan that they choose, but some may require additional support in navigating their options. Information on how to enrol in government-sponsored supplementary health benefit programs is available on the Alberta Health website at www.alberta.ca/drug-coverage-health-benefits.aspx.

The Government of Alberta is also offering an extension to the OAT Gap Coverage Program for participants who have fully utilized their initial medication allotment and must have *already* applied for a supplementary health benefits program that is not yet active. This extension allows eligible Albertans an additional allotment of OAT prescription drugs within a 12-month period.

Program participants

As a reminder, this program is to support Albertans who currently **do not** have supplementary health benefits. This program is not intended to replace any existing or current drug coverage from employer group, individual or government-sponsored plans. For clarity, any plan member with coverage through Non-Group Coverage (Group 1), Coverage for Seniors (Group 66), a low-income health benefits plan or private coverage is not eligible for the OAT Gap Coverage Program or Extension. Claims **must** be submitted to their current supplementary health benefit plan where applicable.

Quantity limits

The OAT Gap Coverage period is calculated based on the quantity of OAT prescription drug dispensed. Program claims are adjudicated against a quantity limit of 1,500 ml for methadone or 360 tablets for buprenorphine/naloxone. This represents approximately 120 days of treatment for the average dose patient.

Please note that OAT Gap Coverage does not need to be continuous; this program allows for patients to start therapy several times within a 12-month period and still receive gap coverage if necessary.

Enrolment and eligibility

No enrolment form is required to access the OAT Gap Coverage Program. To be eligible, patients must

- not have other supplementary health benefits;
- be registered with the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan and have a valid Personal Health Number (PHN); pseudo PHNs are not eligible under this program; and
- have a valid prescription for buprenorphine/naloxone or methadone.

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To be eligible for the OAT Gap Coverage Program Extension, patients must

- complete the *OAT Gap Coverage Program Extension Request Form* and submit to Alberta Blue Cross. The form can be completed by the patient, a family member or a health-care professional. Note that only fully completed forms will be processed. The form is available at <https://idbl.ab.bluecross.ca/idbl/DBL/60082.pdf>;
- have applied for a supplementary health benefit plan that is not yet active. The coverage start date must be included on the form;
- be registered with the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan and have a valid Personal Health Number (PHN); pseudo PHNs are not eligible under this program; and
- have a valid prescription for buprenorphine/naloxone or methadone.

Claiming and review processes

Note: If there is existing drug plan coverage for the patient, pharmacies must ensure that claims are not submitted under the OAT Gap Coverage Program. All claims submitted to Alberta Blue Cross for payment are subject to Compliance Verification Reviews and Alberta Blue Cross retains the right to recover payments when appropriate.

Please refer to Benefact 852 – April 2020 for information on eligible products and claiming processes.

More information about this program is available at <https://www.alberta.ca/opioid-agonist-therapy-gap-coverage-program.aspx>.

For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at

780-498-8370 (Edmonton and area)

403-294-4041 (Calgary and area)

1-800-361-9632 (toll free)

FAX 780-498-8406 (Edmonton and area)

FAX 1-877-305-9911 (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims.

Visit ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php

