

# MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN

<b>ISSUE DATE</b> July 27, 2009	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> August 3, 2009	<b>NUMBER</b> *See Below
<b>SUBJECT</b> Prior Authorization of Buprenorphine Agents (Suboxone and Subutex) – Pharmacy Services		<b>BY</b>  Michael Nardone, Deputy Secretary Office of Medical Assistance Programs

## **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this bulletin is to:

1. Inform prescribing providers the certain Buprenorphine Agents (Suboxone and Subutex) will require prior authorization effective August 3, 2009; and
2. Issue updated Prior Authorization of Pharmaceutical Services Handbook pages related to Buprenorphine Agents to include the type of medical information needed to evaluate requests for Suboxone and Subutex.

## **SCOPE:**

This bulletin applies to all licensed pharmacies and prescribers that are enrolled in the Medical Assistance (MA) Program and provide services in the fee-for-service (FFS) delivery system including pharmacy services to residents of long term care facilities.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Department of Public Welfare's (Department) Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Board meets semi-annually to review provider prescribing and dispensing practices for efficacy, safety, and quality and to recommend interventions for prescribers and pharmacists through the Department's Prospective Drug Use Review (ProDUR) and Retrospective Drug Use Review (RetroDUR) programs.

01-09-30	09-09-31	27-09-28
02-09-27	11-09-27	30-09-27
03-09-27	14-09-27	31-09-32
08-09-31	24-09-30	32-09-27

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Visit the Office of Medical Assistance Programs Web site at [www.dpw.state.pa.us/omap](http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/omap)

**DISCUSSION:**

During the December 2008 meeting, the DUR Board recommended that Buprenorphine Agents (Suboxone and Subutex) require prior authorization. The DUR Board also recommended guidelines to determine medical necessity which were subject to public review and comment, and subsequently approved for implementation by the Department.

**PROCEDURE:**

The procedures to request prior authorization of Buprenorphine Agents (Suboxone and Subutex) and to dispense an emergency supply, when necessary and without prior authorization, are found in SECTION I of the Prior Authorization of Pharmaceutical Services Handbook. The Department will consider elements specified in the clinical review guidelines (which are included in the attached provider handbook pages in SECTION II chapters related to the specific drugs) to determine medical necessity.

As set forth in 55 Pa. Code § 1101.67(a), the procedures described in the handbook pages must be followed to ensure appropriate and timely processing of prior authorization requests for drugs that require prior authorization.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Prior Authorization of Pharmaceutical Services Handbook - Updated pages

SECTION II  
Buprenorphine Agents