

Press Release

June 15, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr. Sharon Harris

516- 676-2008

safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Ensuring Access To Care For Patients With An Opioid Use Disorder During COVID-19

The American Medical Association (AMA) is providing the following policy recommendations amid the COVID-19 global outbreak. These recommendations are to help guide policymakers reduce the stress being experienced by patients with an opioid use disorder (OUD) and pain as well as support efforts to continue harm reduction efforts in communities across the United States. The AMA is greatly concerned by an increasing number of reports from national, state and local media suggesting increases in opioid-related mortality – most particularly those related to fentanyl. To that end, the AMA issued the following recommendations:

- The AMA urges governors to adopt new U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) guidance providing flexibility for physicians managing patients with opioid use disorder. This includes authorizing prescriptions for buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid use disorder to new and existing patients based on an evaluation via telephone.
- Designate medications to treat addiction (buprenorphine, methadone, naltrexone) and medications to reverse opioid-related overdose (naloxone) as “essential services” to reduce barriers to access during “shelter-in-place” orders. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration has already waived federal requirements for in-person visits before controlled substance prescribing; we encourage states to take similar action for their controlled substance regulations.
- Prohibit cost-sharing and prior authorization for medications used to treat addiction, including buprenorphine, methadone and naltrexone; allow for a 90-day prescription for patients receiving buprenorphine; payers should suspend all day limits on residential and intensive out-patient therapy.

- States should request a blanket exception to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP) to receive Take-Home doses of a patient's medication for opioid use disorder.
- Remove any restrictions on the Medicaid preferred drug lists to help avoid medication shortages. This includes ensuring coverage for methadone for patients receiving care in an OTP.
- Correctional and justice settings should temporarily waive strict requirements for submitting drug tests, in-person counseling and "check-ins" and similar requirements; suspend consequences for failure to meet strict reporting, counseling and testing requirements, including removal from public housing, loss of public benefits, and return to jail or prison. Additional efforts must be made to ensure people receiving Medication Assisted Treatment in criminal justice settings receive help in transitioning to care after release.

The American Medical Association is the largest association of physicians—both MDs and DOs—and medical students in the United States. Its mission is "to promote the art and science of medicine and the betterment of public health." For more information please visit www.ama-assn.org.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic and COVID-19 at www.safeglencove.org.