



To all interested parties,

As some of you may be aware, on March 21, 2018, the Government of Canada published in the Canada Gazette, Part II, regulatory amendments that will change the way methadone is regulated under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA) and the *Narcotic Control Regulations* (NCR).

In summary, these will allow practitioners to prescribe, administer, sell or provide methadone without applying for and obtaining an exemption under subsection 56(1) of the CDSA. This is for both the treatment of opioid use disorders and for analgesia.

Please be advised that the amendments will come into force on May 19, 2018. More information regarding these can be found at <http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2018/2018-03-21/html/sor-dors37-eng.html>.

These regulatory amendments will help Canadians have greater access to a comprehensive array of treatment options.

What will this mean:

For Practitioners

Practitioners can prescribe and administer methadone without obtaining an exemption under subsection 56(1) of the CDSA from Health Canada if:

- The person or animal is a patient under their professional treatment; and
- Methadone is required for the condition for which the person or animal is receiving treatment.

This regulatory amendment cancels any previously issued subsection 56(1) exemptions related to methadone. It also applies to temporary methadone exemptions; including in correctional facilities, clinics and hospitals.

Under the CDSA, “practitioners” include medical doctors, dentists, veterinarians, nurse practitioners, midwives and podiatrists, who are registered and entitled under the laws of a province to practise in that province. However, midwives and podiatrists are not authorized to prescribe methadone.

Medical residents should contact their respective provincial licensing bodies for information on whether they are permitted to prescribe and administer methadone to their patients.

For Pharmacists

Pharmacists will no longer need to contact Health Canada in order to verify if a practitioner holds a valid subsection 56(1) exemption to prescribe methadone. Methadone is permitted to be prescribed in the same manner as other narcotics under the NCR. As such, pharmacists may sell or provide a narcotic to a person if the pharmacist has first received a written order or prescriptions, signed and dated, by a practitioner.

It is to be noted that when dealing with controlled substances, practitioners and pharmacists are still required to meet all other applicable provisions of the CDSA and its associated regulations including the NCR, as well as the

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requirements established by the relevant jurisdictions or licensing authorities governing their respective practices (e.g. College of Physicians and Surgeons or Nurses, Medical Councils, etc.). Furthermore, as part of the community pharmacy inspection program, Health Canada will continue to monitor, promote and verify compliance with federal regulatory requirements.

The NCR can be found at: http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._1041/

For Provincial and Territorial Licensing Authorities

Provincial and territorial licensing bodies may wish to maintain oversight mechanisms, training and other requirements related to prescribing and administering methadone. Please be advised that Health Canada will be directing practitioner and pharmacist's inquiries related to these requirements to their respective provincial or territorial licensing authority.

Please note that the information related to these regulatory amendments will soon be available on Health Canada's [website](#) and will include links to guidelines for the management of opioid use disorders.

We invite you to share this information with your members and any interested parties.

If you have any questions, please contact us at hc.exemption.sc@canada.ca

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