

Dear DEA Registrant,

In 2022, 6.1 million people in the United States had an opioid use disorder (OUD). Among them, only 18.3% received medication-assisted treatment. The removal of the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 “x-waiver” in December 2022 eliminated a significant barrier to treatment for OUD, dramatically increasing the number of medical professionals who can prescribe buprenorphine from the previously eligible 130,000 prescribers.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are committed to ensuring safe and ready access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD), especially in rural or underserved areas where treatment options have been limited. With the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023,<sup>1</sup> there was an immediate and significant increase in the number of practitioners who can prescribe schedule III MOUD products (e.g., buprenorphine combination products containing buprenorphine and naloxone) for patients with OUD.

As access to treatment increases, it is understood that the use of MOUD products will likely increase at the same time. DEA recognizes that there have been recent increases in demand for certain schedule III MOUD controlled substances as compared to years prior to the Opioid Public Health Emergency, and that there may be a corresponding increase in prescriptions for these medications from medical providers. DEA supports collaboration amongst all DEA registrants to ensure there is an adequate and uninterrupted supply of MOUD products when these products are appropriately prescribed. Distributors should carefully examine quantitative thresholds they have established to ensure that individuals with OUD who need buprenorphine are able to access it without undue delay. DEA has posted a guidance document on its portal related to this issue:

[https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/GDP/\(DEA-DC-065\)\(EO-DEA258\)\\_O\\_A\\_SOR\\_and\\_Thresholds\\_\(Final\).pdf](https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/GDP/(DEA-DC-065)(EO-DEA258)_O_A_SOR_and_Thresholds_(Final).pdf).

For more information, please visit [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov) and/or [www.DEAdiversion.usdoj.gov](http://www.DEAdiversion.usdoj.gov). It is our sincere hope that the remarkable increase in the number of medical professionals who can prescribe this life-saving medication will not only change the lives of individuals with OUD, but will also stem the escalating rate of opioid-related deaths at a population level.

**Please join us in this fight to save lives.**

Sincerely,



Anne M. Milgram  
Administrator,  
Drug Enforcement Administration  
Department of Justice



Rachel L. Levine, M.D.  
ADM, USPHS  
Assistant Secretary for Health  
Department of Health and Human



Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D.  
Assistant Secretary for Mental  
Health and Substance Use  
Department of Health and Human  
Services

<sup>1</sup> Pub. L. No. 117-328, 136 Stat. 4459 (2022).