

COVID-19 Care in the Community - Case Management in Pharmacy Operational Guide

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In-home Visit: Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST)

Eligibility Criteria:

- OST clients in mandatory COVID-19 isolation including:
 - Clients who are COVID-19 positive.
 - Clients who are considered household contacts of a person who is COVID-19 positive.
- As part of the In-home Visit service a pharmacy may claim reimbursement for:
 - A pharmacist visiting a client's home to provide observed consumption of OST
 - A support person to accompany the pharmacist
 - Mileage reimbursement

Background

Under the current OST guidelines (section 9.2.3), the pharmacist is involved in administering observed consumed dose at the pharmacy. A funded service allowing for pharmacists to deliver opioid substitution treatment (OST) to clients at their home (or wherever they are isolating) has been created to support the provision of care for isolating OST clients.

The principles of the service are:

- Wherever possible a person's therapeutic relationship with their usual community pharmacy is maintained.
- The Hawke's Bay pharmacy community will work in partnership with the Mental Health and Addiction Service (MHAS) staff, however the bulk of the delivery and observed consumption will be the community pharmacy's service.
- Staff and client safety needs to be considered when deciding on the procedure that your pharmacy will follow.

Planning for COVID-19 in the community

It is strongly recommended that the pharmacy discuss and document a plan for at home consumption prior to a client being required to isolate.

Points to consider are:

- Contact details.
- Times that the pharmacist will be available to deliver the OST.
- Where the client will consume (i.e at the front door).
- Risk factors for the pharmacist to be aware of at the client's home.

What is the process?

Once the Pharmacy is alerted that the OST client is isolating:

- Inform the MHAS staff and OST clinicians via OST@hbdhb.govt.nz. (This will be monitored and responded to by the team during business hours Monday to Friday)
- There may be some flexibility to increase takeaway doses over the period of isolation, this can be discussed with the OST clinicians and will be confirmed via a prescription.

- Contact the client and reinforce that they are not to leave isolation for their OST and confirm delivery arrangements with client.

Prior to the home visit consider and plan for:

- Safe transportation to and from the dispensing pharmacy.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE), infection prevention and control measures as per organisation, local alcohol and drug service or district health board protocols and safe disposal of PPE after dose delivery.
- Systems to return unused OST medication to the dispensing pharmacy.
- The process for ensuring privacy and upholding mana of the client.

The process for consumption will generally follow the below protocol:

- Check for hazards on entry to the property.
- Call the client to advise when you are at the property, explain and ensure the process for delivery and consumption under observation (if required).
- Place medication at appropriate site (eg, doorstep, front porch).
- Knock on the door and step back at a safe two-metre social distance.
- Confirm client's identity and ensure that the client is safe to consume OST medications (eg, patient is well, no obvious signs of intoxication from a safe distance.)
- Ask client to verbally confirm name, date of birth and dose(s) is correct.
- Observe client's consumption of the dose.
- Sign medication chart/records (with a witness).

What to do if OST cannot be delivered

Situation	Actions to take
OST is not delivered to the client due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client not being home or coming to the door. • Client being intoxicated. • Suspected diversion. • Other safety concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return the OST to the pharmacy as per the usual protocol. • Inform the MHAS service via OST@hbdhb.govt.nz
OST is not delivered to the client due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client being unwell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return the OST to the pharmacy as per the usual protocol. • Inform the MHAS service via OST@hbdhb.govt.nz. • Contact the client's GP.
Pharmacy is unable to deliver the service due to staffing or other constraints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the MHAS service via OST@hbdhb.govt.nz to arrange for delivery. • Contact support@healthhb.co.nz.

Tools available:

- [ISBAR communication framework between health care workers.](#)
- [Patient fact sheet: COVID-19 Seeking medical help – when and how](#)
- [New Zealand Practice Guidelines for Opioid Substitution Treatment 2014 | Ministry of Health NZ](#)
- [COVID-19: Infection prevention and control recommendations for health and disability care workers | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

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