

Physician Requirements to Prescribe Buprenorphine

Qualifications and Training

In order to qualify for the waiver, licensed physicians must either hold a subspecialty board certification, or obtain eight hours of specialized training on buprenorphine therapy. Additionally, physicians must also have the capacity to refer patients to appropriate counseling or other non-pharmacological therapies. The 8 hour certification training required to prescribe buprenorphine can be obtained through web-based or live programs offered through the [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#), [American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry](#), or the [American Psychiatric Association](#).

Applying for a Waiver

In order to begin prescribing buprenorphine, eligible physicians must submit a [waiver notification form](#) documenting the physician's qualifying information to the [Center for Substance Abuse Treatment \(CSAT\)](#). Once the notification is received, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) issues an identification number, known as a waiver or "X," which is to be included on all buprenorphine prescriptions, in addition to the physician's regular DEA number. For more information on certification requirements, visit the [CSAT Buprenorphine Information Center](#).

Patient Limits

An additional requirement for physicians includes a limit on the number of patients each provider can treat at any one time with buprenorphine. Previously, this number was 30, however, Congress passed bill H.R. 6344 in December 2006 that allows certified physicians, who have been prescribing for at least 12 months, to treat up to 100 patients. Under the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 2006 (ONDCPRA), physicians must again notify CSAT of their intent or "need" to treat additional patients.