



March 9, 2023

Re: DAL NH 23-1 Management and
Treatment Options for Resident with
Substance Use Disorder

Dear Administrator:

During their lifetime, individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) may develop serious medical conditions requiring admission to skilled nursing facilities (SNF). For both opioid use disorder (OUD) and alcohol use disorder (AUD), medication for addiction treatment (MAT) is the standard of care. For most individuals, MAT is recommended to be used as long-term maintenance therapy. The medications prescribed include, but are not limited to methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone, disulfiram, and acamprosate. SUD is treated most effectively as a chronic medical condition, akin to other medical conditions benefitting from a chronic care management approach. Robust data have demonstrated consistently that MAT creates stability, improves health outcomes, and reduces mortality. To maintain these treatment goals, seamless continuation of MAT is imperative much like other medications used to treat other chronic medical conditions.

To date, admissions to New York State SNFs for individuals with SUD requiring MAT have been fraught with systemic challenges, limiting access to essential higher-level care for patients. Misperceptions regarding the complexity of care for people with SUD, specifically MAT, likely contribute to these challenges. It is our hope from the NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) that with improved education about SUD and the benefits of MAT, appreciation of the complex community processes needed for uninterrupted medication access, and support from collaborating agencies like OASAS, that access to SNF level care for individuals with SUD will improve. In addition, a detailed understanding of how some SNFs successfully have met these challenges would contribute to this discussion.

The goal of NYS OASAS is to ensure that all individuals with SUD have access to timely, appropriate levels of high-quality medical care in addition to seamless continuity of MAT. OASAS would like to develop a partnership with SNFs and other Long-Term Care Facilities' Administrators and membership organizations to address historical misperceptions of SUD and to provide ongoing education and support in order to facilitate progress toward this goal.

If you have any specific questions or require further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out with questions to: AddictionMedicine@oasas.ny.gov.

Thank you.

Chinazo Cunningham, MD, MS
Commissioner, NYS OASAS

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