

# ECHO Rural Oral Health Case Recommendations

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**Case Overview:** Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) make up a very effective plan of care to assist patients in their recovery journey. Unfortunately, suboxone films promote dental caries in an already high-risk population. Dental and medical knowledge are severely lacking in this arena.

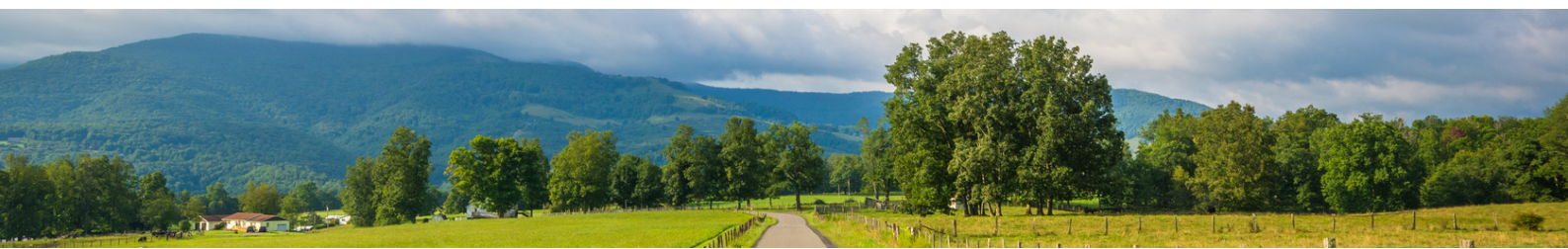
MAT/MOUD patients historically present with existing generalized moderate to severe dental caries and severe xerostomia. Suboxone films contain sucrose, have a PH of 3.4, and must be dissolved in the mouth over a period of 15 - 30 minutes. An evidence-based protocol should be established to intervene and prevent the progression of carious lesions to dental abscesses that can lead to pain and compromised attempts to manage pain, and potentially leading to relapse.

**Ask of the Group:** Are there any educational materials available specifically around suboxone films and its negative effects on oral health? How can we go about developing materials in this area such as:

- A behavioral-medical-dental health messaging campaign
- Continuing education (CE) modules of health care providers operating in this arena
- Behavioral health-oral health linkages to mitigate progression of dental disease during and after MAT/MOUD therapy

## **Current Plan of Action:**

- Develop an inter-professional educational MAT/MOUD module for health care providers, including nursing and support staff.
- Construct a dental operatory in the Behavioral Health Wing that will function as a dental point of service.
- Have dental residents provide dental services with rotating addictionology fellows and medical residents participating.
- Develop standardized pre/peri and post MAT procedural protocols.



# Recommendations

- ▶ MAT support: Emergency department physicians do not want to be relegated to being “MAT dispensers.” Policies were created so that they don’t serve as the second-dose provider.
  - Potential opportunity during MAT dispensing: add a fluoride varnish application at the point of care (by physician, nurse, etc.) to support improved oral health outcomes re: sucralose in the dosing.
- ▶ Suboxone has a sub-lingual tablet that could be explored, but it is expensive. Consider tablet mode of treatment if possible/affordable. Better options to support oral health exist, but lack of funding results in inequitable access.
- ▶ Patient education opportunities: a dental pre-clearance visit occurs prior to program intervention. Silver diamine fluoride (SDF) is a common tool used for arresting the decay during that dental visit. SDF is also used as a preventive tool based on the amount of decay often seen in patients. Xylitol is commonly used, too, in order to promote prevention.
- ▶ Get in touch with clinics (likely health centers) that are already educating patients and caregivers on opioid use disorder and the use of Suboxone, and elevate and share their work and materials with other partners.
- ▶ Reach out to the following individuals, who presented on medical-dental health integration at the 2022 National Oral Health Conference:
  - Candace Owen, RDH, MS, MPH: [candace@nnoha.org](mailto:candace@nnoha.org)
  - Irene Hilton, DDS, MPH, FACD (dental consultant): [irene@nnoha.org](mailto:irene@nnoha.org)
- ▶ Host a virtual meeting with providers who are and are not knowledgeable in this area to collaborate and learn from each other. The hope is that there will be active learning and active treatment planning to create educational materials that can be published or shared. This could be a great way to access expertise from various places, similar to the ECHO model of this Rural Oral Health ECHO.
- ▶ Explore what medical education looks like around the topic of opioid use disorder and the use of Suboxone at local medical schools. Is it possible for local peers in dental education (e.g., dentists, dental hygienists, etc.) to be involved in interprofessional education opportunities? Educational materials could be created by students and faculty and shared with other stakeholders.
- ▶ Suggested resources:
  - [FDA web page devoted to Suboxone and dental complications](#)
  - [Crossroads of Erie Treatment Center](#)



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