



AUG 10 2007

Center for Mental Health Services  
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention  
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment  
Rockville MD 20857

Dear Colleague:

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), as part of its mission to regulate the use of methadone and buprenorphine in the treatment of opioid dependence by opioid treatment programs (OTPs), is releasing the updated Guidelines for the Accreditation of Opioid Treatment Programs. These Guidelines were developed by an Expert Panel that convened in October-November 2005. The panel reviewed and revised the Guidelines in light of new scientific research findings, advancements in the field, and state-of-the-art, evidence-based practices. The draft Guidelines' availability was announced in the Federal Register published on April 21, 2006. The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) carefully considered and reviewed all comments and modified the Guidelines as appropriate. CSAT appreciates the careful thought and attention members of the opioid treatment community gave to the draft Guidelines.

The Guidelines provide accreditation bodies and OTPs with current best practice guidance on a variety of issues, including:

- Evaluations, assessment, and factors that determine a patient's initial dose.
- The need for caution and physician oversight regarding an overly rapid increase in dosage during the treatment induction phase because of the long half-life of methadone.
- Recommendations for electrocardiogram (EKG) testing as well as identifying risk factors that may increase the QT interval during a patient's assessment. An increase in a patient's QT interval may lead to *torsades de pointes*, a potentially life-threatening cardiac arrhythmia.
- Policies in determining eligibility, through a multidisciplinary approach typically led by the primary clinician where a physician makes the final decision, as well as subsequent evaluations of patients for take-home medications.
- Enhanced monitoring, reporting, and investigating on sentinel events, significant adverse events, and untoward events.

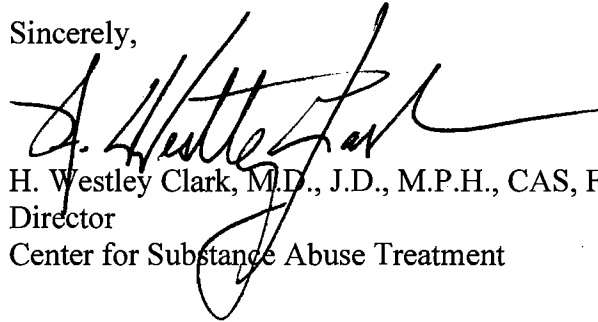
The Guidelines are being provided to the SAMHSA-approved accreditation organizations to assist them in developing standards that will be applied as part of the opioid treatment program accreditation process. All programs that use methadone for addiction treatment must achieve and sustain accreditation by SAMHSA-approved accreditation organizations.

On July 20, 2007, the SAMHSA Administrator renewed the approval of three accreditation organizations: the Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), and the State of Washington. This renewal is for a five-year period from July 20, 2007, to July 20, 2012.

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To obtain an on-line version of the SAMHSA Guidelines for the Accreditation of Opioid Treatment Programs, please go to [www.dpt.samhsa.gov](http://www.dpt.samhsa.gov). For additional information or questions regarding the Guidelines, please contact Jennifer Fan at 240-276-1759 or [Jennifer.Fan@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Fan@samhsa.hhs.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Westley Clark', written over the typed name and title.

H. Westley Clark, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., CAS, FASAM  
Director  
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment