

Key differences between the 2006 OTP Guidelines and the
2018 NSW Clinical Guidelines: Treatment of Opioid Dependence

- The 2018 Guidelines increase the patient limit for non-accredited prescribers for methadone, buprenorphine, and buprenorphine-naloxone from the previous 5 patients to 10 or 20 patients, as follows (see *2018 Guidelines, page 72, Section 3.2.3*):

For methadone, unaccredited medical practitioners may apply to the Pharmaceutical Regulatory Unit (PRU) for individual patient authority to prescribe for up to ten low-risk patients who are being transferred from an accredited prescriber. (Previously they could prescribe for five such patients).

For buprenorphine and buprenorphine-naloxone, unaccredited medical practitioners may apply to the PRU for individual patient authority to initiate patients with buprenorphine or buprenorphine-naloxone. Unaccredited prescribers may be authorised for up to 20 buprenorphine or buprenorphine-naloxone patients. (Again, they could previously prescribe for five such patients).

- The 2018 Guidelines endorse the initiation of non-high risk patients in primary care settings, with the aim of supporting increased provision of treatment through primary care and generalist settings (see *2018 Guidelines, page 17*). This is provided clinicians have adequate training, skills, and resources, particularly to regularly monitor patients; that they communicate effectively with patients and carers and there are pathways for accessing specialist support if complications arise. (Previously most patients were initiated generally in public OTP clinics).
- The 2018 Guidelines move to a risk based model for case-management and take-away dosing (Categorising treatment needs (case flagging) as high, moderate, or low; - see *2018 Guidelines, page 32*).
- The 2018 Guidelines have changes to the recommended dosing limits at initiation (e.g. *most patients should have a day 1 dose of 8 mg buprenorphine, 2018 Guidelines, page 26*) (previously, usually 4mg); and for transfers between treatment drugs (e.g. *for transfers from methadone to buprenorphine, the initial dose is 2 mg (previously 4mg), and an additional dose of 6 mg is administered 1 hour after the initial dose - 2018 Guidelines, page 27*).
- Changes to recommendations for action following missed doses (see *2018 Guidelines, page 51*).
- Updated and new information in the Child Protection section (see *2018 Guidelines, page 73, Section 3.3*).
- Inclusion of NSW OTP Community Pharmacy Dosing Point Protocol (TG201/2) (see *2018 Guidelines, page 88, Section 3.6*).
- Updated information about 'Assessing and managing fitness to drive' (see *2018 Guidelines, page 47*).