



DEPARTMENT OF
**PUBLIC HEALTH
AND WELLNESS**

Medication-Assisted Treatment for Addiction

What is Medication-Assisted Treatment?

Medication-Assisted treatment is treatment that includes a use of medication along with counseling and other support. Medication-assisted treatment is recognized as a best practice and proven successful for people suffering from opioid addiction. Opioid medications include: heroin, codeine, hydrocodone, oxycodone, and morphine.

Opioids are highly addictive. Addiction is a disease. It can't be cured but it can be treated with medication, counseling, and support from family and friends. It is a chronic disease, like heart disease or diabetes, and is a medical condition for life. It can be managed so that a person can live a healthy, productive life.

The goal of medication-assisted treatment is to help a person recover from addiction. It provides a safe, controlled level of medication to overcome the use of a problem opioid.

What is methadone?

Methadone is a man-made narcotic medicine. It is a liquid. It stops withdrawal and doesn't make a person high or nod off. It prohibits the high from other narcotics such as heroin. If the participant is not in a state of withdrawal or high, he or she is able to participate fully in counseling and daily life. Methadone can also be safely used during pregnancy. Methadone is one of the most studied and proven-effective methods for the treatment of opiate addiction.

Are there any methadone clinics currently in Louisville?

Since 1991, the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness has provided medication-assisted therapy, a not-for-profit methadone clinic, the MORE Center, at 1448 S. 15th St. The MORE Center offers treatment which includes a daily dose of methadone, individual and group counseling, and random urine drug testing (observed). Participants are also able to be tested for HIV and hepatitis C and, if positive, referred to treatment and care. Once participants are entered into the care of the MORE clinic, they are at a decreased risk for contracting HIV and hepatitis C as their IV drug use is halted.

Two private Kentuckiana clinics offer medication-assisted therapy (methadone):

- Center for Behavioral Health, 1402-A Browns Lane, Louisville, KY 40207, 502.894.0234
- Southern Indiana Treatment Center, 7509 Charlestown Pike, Charlestown, IN 47111, 877.920.2338



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Who monitors and regulates methadone clinics?

Medication is monitored by nursing staff and a licensed physician prescribes the medication and oversees patient treatment. Methadone clinics are monitored through the State Narcotic Authority, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Inspector General.

Who uses methadone clinics?

Medication assisted therapy, which combines the use of methadone with group and individual counseling, is a best practice recommended for anyone who has an addiction to an opioid or narcotic drugs such as heroin, oxycodone, morphine, and codeine. In Louisville Metro, drug addiction does not favor a particular race or socioeconomic status. In fact, a 2014-15 LMPD map of drug overdoses shows overdoses happening in every Metro Council district. A February 2014 state Health Issue Poll found that 9 percent of Kentuckians and 15 percent of young adults ages 18-29, reported a friend or family member struggling with a heroin addiction. A 2011 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 5.2 percent of high-school students in Kentucky reported using heroin. That's double the national average.

Why do we need methadone clinics?

Kentucky's heroin epidemic has been well documented. Demand for treatment services is increasing from several sources:

A. Louisville Metro Syringe Exchange (LMSEP)

- Since it began in June 2015, more than 1,100 people have participated in the LM Syringe Exchange Program. Seventy-five percent report using heroin. Since beginning the program 64 people have been referred for treatment and we expect that number to greatly increase. The more capacity our community has to provide treatment, the more people we can refer to that treatment.

B. Pregnant women: Methadone treatment protocol is the gold standard for pregnant women who are addicted to opiates.

C. Louisville Metro Corrections: Director Mark Bolton has said that 30 to 90 inmates a day struggle with heroin withdrawal

D. Drug Court has recently approved client's ability to use MAT as a treatment option. There are over 2,650 clients entering the drug court system on a monthly basis. We expect increased need here.

E. Sheer increase in number of heroin addicts in Louisville Metro Area. More people are seeking treatment as they learn that help is available and affordable.

Additionally, the number of Louisville and Kentucky residents with health insurance has substantially increased since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Kentucky leads the nation in having the fewest people without health insurance (*Governor Beshear, September 15, 2015*). Having health insurance provides people access to care. However, it has been well documented that Kentucky faces a



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shortage of treatment options for people with heroin addiction. In fact, the Kentucky attorney general's office has said Kentucky has only one-tenth of the treatment beds needed.

Does more crime happen around methadone clinics?

There is no evidence that crime increases around methadone clinics. A 2012 study lead by the University of Maryland School of Medicine found that crime in an area does not increase because a methadone clinic opens. (*The Baltimore Sun, Andrea K. Walker, April 30, 2012*).

What are some other sources of information?

Kentuckians Seeking Treatment for Prescription Opioid Abuse Have Positive Outcomes With Opiate Treatment Programs, Fact Sheet, 2015, University of Kentucky Center of Drug and Alcohol Research. <http://cdar.uky.edu/kortos/>

Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Addiction, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, www.samhsa.gov

Heroin addicts threaten to overwhelm agencies: jail, treatment facilities, drug courts and hospitals are flooded by heroin addicts, by Chris Kenning, Courier Journal, <http://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/investigations/2014/05/16/heroin-addicts-threaten-overwhelm-agencies/2140760/>

American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence, <http://www.aatod.org>

National Institute on Drug Abuse, www.drugabuse.gov