



Dear OTP Colleagues:

With concerns about COVID-19 (the coronavirus) on the rise, OASAS would like all OTPs to consider the following preventative measures.

- Please use this guidance in conjunction with the correspondence you received and will continue to receive from OASAS on COVID-19, which explains and provides links to the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the NYS Department of Health (DOH), as well as general information about infection control and prevention strategies. Please remain updated on this information and continue to review it carefully with your program's leadership and staff and make any necessary adjustments to your program's policies and procedures. Please also note that information about COVID-19 will continue to be updated by the CDC, the NYS DOH, and local health departments, so please remain informed about the latest information.
- In anticipation of possible staff shortages due to illness, caring for others with illness, and those quarantined due to other risk criteria for COVID-19, OTPs should make arrangements with agencies who provide per diem staff so that coverage for essential staff (e.g., those that can dispense medications) can be arranged as necessary.
- Identify at minimum one room which can be used to isolate any patient or staff who has been identified as having symptoms concerning for COVID-19. Such individuals should be isolated in the room with a face mask on the individual and with the door closed, and Standard, Contact, and Airborne Precautions should be enacted for any medical evaluation, or when providing OUD medications as appropriate. The local health department and NYS DOH should be contacted to determine next steps.
- Facilitate educational town halls to discuss the importance of preventative measures with patients and staff. The goal is to reduce anxiety about people's access to their medications, provide staff education regarding attendance requirements, and address any other human resources concerns.
- Ensure you have up-to-date emergency contacts for your OTP patients.
- Ensure that written communications - e.g., flyers, posters – are shared and posted in prominent locations regarding reducing the spread of the virus, including hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and other prevention procedures.
- Utilize take home medications to reduce clinic traffic, when and where appropriate. This includes but is not limited to assessment of patients who are medically compromised

and at elevated risk of complications from COVID-19 as a preventive measure, and the provision of take-home doses to them. Exception requests should be submitted for anyone who does not meet time in treatment requirements, with a description of how the benefits associated with reducing potential exposure to COVID-19 outweigh the risks associated with potential diversion.

- Consider bringing medications to quarantined or otherwise home-bound patients who cannot travel and do not have a designated other option available to them. A federal exception request would have to be submitted.
- Reach out to your OASAS Regional Office for more information on telehealth access and opportunities

Please note:

At present NYS has not been given approval to give blanket waivers for provision of take-home medication, OTPs bringing medications to home bound patients, or providing medications to designated others. All of these requests MUST be submitted to the CSAT extranet for both state and federal review and approval.

As always,

- Notify the SOTA office of any service changes.
- All OTP closures must be approved by the SOTA office.
- OTPs must maintain a 3-4-week stock of medication (methadone, buprenorphine, etc.)
- Contact us during regular office hours at Gregory James (#646-728-4583) or Belinda Greenfield (#646-728-4581) or off-hours (#201-921-6849) if any questions or issues.