

OPIOID AGONIST TREATMENT UPDATE

Suboxone® 12mg and 16mg tablets available via Special Authority request

12mg and 16mg dose of Suboxone® (the brand name formulation of buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual tablets) are now available in B.C., but are only covered by PharmaCare on an exceptional basis (i.e., Non-benefit drug).

Prescribers who wish to prescribe the 12mg or 16mg Suboxone® tablets to a patient enrolled in BC PharmaCare can submit a Special Authority request for coverage. Through the Special Authority program, non-benefit drugs are considered for PharmaCare coverage only on an exceptional basis, generally when all available PharmaCare benefit options have been tried without success or are unsuitable for the patient, and when there are no other options for coverage (e.g., Extended Health – Blue Cross) available to that patient.

How to apply for Special Authority Coverage

Special Authority requests for coverage of Suboxone® 12mg and 16mg can be submitted in two ways:

1. The [General Special Authority Request form](#) (with Sections 1, 2 and “Requested drug exemption” portion of Section 3 completed); **OR**
2. A signed letter from the prescriber.

Information that must be included in the request or letter:

- Confirmed diagnosis of opioid use disorder;
- Dose and duration of trial of benefit Suboxone® strengths (2mg and/or 8mg);
- Response to trial of benefit strengths of Suboxone®;
- Detailed rationale that Suboxone® 12mg and/or 16mg strengths are required; and
- Any additional pertinent information.

General Special Authority Request form can be accessed here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/forms/5328fil.pdf>

Special Authority forms can be faxed to 1 800 609-4884 (toll free) (*PREFERRED*)

OR, mailed to this address: PharmaCare, Box 9652 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9P4

After the request is submitted

Special Authority requests are prioritized by date received and by urgency. Once the request is processed, PharmaCare will notify the prescriber of the decision unless the prescriber has indicated on the form that confirmation is not required.

Estimated turnaround times

If a response for coverage is required urgently then please indicate “**urgent**” on the request so that it is processed as a top priority over all other Special Authority requests. If not urgent, the request will be processed within 10 business days.

Duration of coverage

Special Authority coverage is valid from the date that approval is entered into a patient's record on PharmaNet, B.C.'s electronic network that links all of the province's community pharmacies and other authorized health care providers.

The duration of coverage for Suboxone® 12mg and 16mg will be for **one year**. Renewal will be available upon submission of a written request indicating the patient's current dose and the specific benefit(s) derived from use of the medication.

To ensure continuity of coverage, prescribers may wish to schedule an appointment with their patient for re-evaluation several weeks in advance of the expiry date so that if a request for renewal is required, it can be submitted at least 2 weeks before the expiry date.

Level of coverage provided to a patient

An approved Special Authority request normally grants full coverage to a drug that would otherwise not be covered or be only partially covered.

Note that full coverage differs from actual reimbursement. Actual reimbursement depends on a patient's PharmaCare plan rules, including any annual deductible and co-payment requirements, and is subject to pricing policies such as the [Maximum Pricing Policy](#), the [Low Cost Alternative \(LCA\) Program](#) or the [Reference Drug Program \(RDP\)](#).

Additional Resources

For up-to-date information on the Special Authority process, including criteria and forms, please see: www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacarespecialauthority

Prescriber Checklist – Submitting a Special Authority Request:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare/sa-checklist.pdf>