



CLAC GUIDELINE: Variation to Pharmacotherapy Takeaway – SUBOXONE TRAVEL

This guideline updates CLAC policy for approval of variations to pharmacotherapy takeaway for stable clients on **buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone)** treatment seeking **takeaway doses for travel up to 10 days**. It does not apply to buprenorphine (Subutex) or methadone, which will continue to be assessed through the full CLAC process.

It details the specified criteria for stability to be met to allow the Chief Poisons Inspector (CPI) discretion to approve takeaway doses for travel up to 10 days **without referral for approval through the full CLAC process**.

Travel to a remote community is **NOT** covered by this guideline. Such requests will continue to be assessed through the full CLAC process.

The Chief Poisons Inspector can decide to refer any application through the full CLAC process.

Rationale

For safety reasons, opiate pharmacotherapy treatment is based on the principle of supervised dosing with takeaway doses as a privilege for a stable client who has made significant progress in reducing or eliminating illicit opiate use, to facilitate life activities such as employment, study, travel.

NT law allows clients on **Suboxone** daily dosing to be prescribed takeaway doses to a maximum of three per week, and on **Suboxone** alternate daily dosing (includes 4 day a week dosing) to be prescribed one takeaway dose per week. This number can be exceeded only by application to the CLAC for special authorisation.

Clinical experience with **Suboxone** indicates reduced risks of diversion, self administration by injection, overdose/death of client/others, with potential for more clients on **Suboxone** to be safely prescribed increased takeaway doses. Approval processes are therefore being simplified for **stable clients on Suboxone** to travel.

Assessment for Travel Takeaway Doses

For authorisation of up to 10 takeaway doses of daily Suboxone or 5 doses of alternate day Suboxone (includes 4 day a week dosing) by the Chief Poisons Inspector for travel purposes, the following information **MUST** be confirmed by the applying doctor on the form overleaf, to be sent by fax to 8922 7200 or emailed to poisonscontrol@nt.gov.au at least 5 working days prior to the proposed travel.

In the case of **urgent travel in a crisis situation** (eg death in the family), the CPI will consider an application for **up to 7 days of travel** lodged at least two working days prior to the proposed travel date if first contacted by telephone on 8922 7341.

Client has:

- been receiving at least the maximum number* of takeaway doses for at least 3 months
- at least 2 consecutive clear urine drug screens within the past 3 months or 3 consecutive clear urine drug screens within the past 6 months
- no evidence of:
 - injecting or using other opiates or illicit drugs, including cannabis, for at least 3 months,
 - no problem with alcohol consumption
 - diverted pharmacotherapy doses in the past 6 months
 - presenting intoxicated for treatment or dosing in the past 6 months
 - prescribed benzodiazepines or stimulants
- not missed more than 4 daily or 2 alternate day doses within the past 3 months
- been stable on the pharmacotherapy program, reliable, keeps review appointments, fulfils the conditions of any contract relating to management
- in the case of travel overseas, investigated any requirements of the country/countries being visited
- provided documentation of travel (application may be approved subject to doctor sighting travel documents)
- stable mental health, no physical health conditions or other medications reducing safety
- an adequate plan for safe packaging & storage in relation to children, other adults.

*3/week if daily dosing; 1/week if alternate day dosing - includes 4 day a week dosing)



Application to Chief Poisons Inspector for Variation to Pharmacotherapy Takeaway – SUBOXONE TRAVEL

Patient Name DOB

Patient Address

For this patient whom I am treating with Suboxonemg daily/alt die, and who plans to travel to/in

(NT town/area; interstate town/area; overseas country/countries)

between the dates of (may be approximate planned dates if final booking dependent on approval)

I confirm the following:

- on maximum legal number of takeaways (for at least 3 months (3/week if daily dosing; 1/week if alternate day dosing - includes 4 day a week dosing)
• no evidence of illicit drug injecting or use, including cannabis, for at least 3 months
• clear urine drug screen dates (at least 2 consecutive in the past 3 months or 3 consecutive in past 6 months).
• no evidence of alcohol intake of concern
• not known to be prescribed benzodiazepines or stimulants
• no evidence of diverted pharmacotherapy doses in past 6 months
• no evidence of presenting intoxicated for treatment or dosing in past 6 months
• not missed more than 4 daily or 2 alternate day doses in past 3 months
• keeps review appointments, fulfils conditions of any contract relating to management
• stable mental health, no physical health conditions, no other medications reducing safety
• satisfactory plan for secure, safe storage re children, other adults
• has checked/is checking relevant requirements for any overseas travel
• I have sighted/will check any travel tickets/documentation (conditional approval may be granted subject to doctor sighting documentation)

AND I consider that can safely care for and use (name of patient)

..... takeaway Suboxone doses of mg daily/alt die during the planned travel. (number)

Signature of doctor Name of doctor

Contact email/fax of doctor