

## Medication Assisted Treatment

*Please note, this information is provided for your education about Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) options. Inclusion of a MAT on this form does not reflect a recommendation or endorsement by the Clinton Counseling Center Jail Program/Family Awareness and Overdose Prevention group.*

Medication-assisted treatment is treatment for addiction that includes the use of medication along with counseling and other support. MAT may help reduce the problems of withdrawal and craving and help a person focus more on making the lifestyle changes needed to live a healthier life. Taking a medication for opioid addiction is similar to taking a medication to control heart disease or diabetes. Used properly, the medication does not create a new addiction; it helps a person manage their addiction so that the benefits of recovery can be maintained.

The most common medications used to treat opioid addiction are **Methadone**, **Buprenorphine** and **Naltrexone**. These medications are sometimes also referred to by their brand names, which are “*Dolophine*” (brand name for Methadone), “*Suboxone*” (brand name for Buprenorphine) and “*Vivitrol*” (brand name for Naltrexone).

Methadone and Buprenorphine both work by tricking the brain into thinking it is still getting the problem opioid. The person taking the medication feels normal, not high, and withdrawal does not occur. Both also reduce cravings. Methadone can be taken at the start of recovery and Buprenorphine can be taken once withdrawal has begun. Naltrexone works in a different way; it blocks the effect of opioid drugs. This takes away the feeling of getting high if the problem drug is used again. Naltrexone cannot be taken until opioids are completely out of the body, usually 7-10 days after withdrawal begins. Taking Buprenorphine or Naltrexone too soon can make withdrawal worse.

These medications are available from some treatment centers and/or from some doctors. Any of the MAT's listed above require follow up visits with medical staff members to make sure the medication is working, that side effects are not too uncomfortable, and that the person is taking medication exactly as told. Following directions is important, because taking the medication improperly can lead to overdose or death.

The cost of medication, whether or not it is covered by insurance, the frequency of dosage and the risks versus the benefits of taking the medication are among some of the facts to take into consideration when deciding on MAT.

From: SAMHSA, MAT for Opioid Addiction: Facts for Family and Friends