

Opioid Use Disorder & Health Care: Skilled Nursing Facilities

People who take medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD), like methadone or buprenorphine, often experience illegal barriers to healthcare.

Admission to Skilled Nursing Facilities

(including nursing homes and long-term care facilities)

People needing care at a skilled nursing facility (SNF) are often denied admission because they take methadone or buprenorphine to treat opioid use disorder (OUD). The U.S. Department of Justice has stated that these practices are illegal discrimination.

Signs of discrimination include:

- SNF has a policy not to admit people taking methadone or buprenorphine
- SNF says someone must taper off of MOUD to be admitted
- SNF says it cannot provide the “type of services” someone with OUD needs
- SNF denies someone admission after commenting about their substance use

For help, call Disability Rights NC at 919-856-2195

Visit LAC’s [MAT ADVOCACY TOOLKIT](#) for materials that can help you advocate!

How Skilled Nursing Facilities Can Provide Access to MOUD

SNFs *can* provide access to MOUD, and many do. Below are some ways SNFs may facilitate access to methadone and buprenorphine:

- The SNF can bring patients to their opioid treatment program (OTP) for methadone doses
- Methadone may be transported from an OTP to an SNF
- The patient’s qualified practitioner in the community can prescribe buprenorphine
- An SNF qualified practitioner can prescribe buprenorphine with a federal waiver. 2021 federal guidance allows qualified practitioners to prescribe buprenorphine to up to 30 patients without satisfying counseling and training requirements
- SNFs may store and administer MOUDs the same way they do other controlled substances

For more information, visit North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services:
[Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorders in Skilled Nursing Facilities | NC Medicaid \(ncdhhs.gov\)](#)

For help in North Carolina, please contact the following at Disability Rights NC:
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