

Clinic 217 Primary Caregiver Suboxone Stabilization Referrals

May 2018

Dear Colleagues:

Clinic 217 will now be accepting direct referrals from family physicians and nurse practitioners in Elgin County for Suboxone (buprenorphine/naloxone) initiation and stabilization in patients with opioid use disorder. Suboxone is used for the treatment of opioid use disorder with long-term outcomes generally more successful than attempts at stopping opioid use altogether, and with a lower risk of overdose compared to other medication use, including methadone. Physicians working at Clinic 217 currently include the following: Dr. Corey Birch, Dr. Annette Brownscombe, Dr. Dean Corrin, Dr. Janel Gracey, Dr. Heinz Mayr and Dr. Brooke Nofle.

Completion of our referral form will assist us with the intake process. Patients require a valid Ontario Health Card. Patients can attend Clinic 217 for initiation of treatment using Suboxone. We can continue to follow them, or we can return them to your care after 5-6 weeks of stabilization for ongoing maintenance therapy prescribed by you, depending on your preference and that of your patient.

Once an intake is booked, a patient must present to our clinic administrator Laura for registration, signing of contracts and review of clinic policies. A thorough intake will then be conducted by a physician. This will consist of obtaining a physical health, mental health and substance use history, followed by a brief but noninvasive physical examination. Patients may expect to spend up to 2 hours at Clinic 217 on day of intake. Patients will be provided with laboratory requisitions for screening for a variety of conditions including blood-borne diseases, EKG, pregnancy in females and testosterone levels in males. Copies of results of all such investigations will be sent to referring health care provider.

We encourage patients to access addiction counselling through Addiction Services of Thames Valley (this is by self-referral), as well as to access AA, NA and

community mental health supports and trauma counselling if desired. We do not offer specific counselling apart from the motivational interviewing techniques we employ during patient encounters. However, we do encourage patients to book longer appointments outside of regular clinic sessions if needed. We refer for psychiatric assessment when appropriate.

It is important to note that patients presenting for Suboxone initiation must be in sufficient opioid withdrawal on day of intake in order for a first prescription to be provided that day. A COWS score of 12 or more is appropriate. We generally advise patients to go 48 hours without using opioids before being seen in our clinic, although many of us have started patients on Suboxone after 24 hours since last opioid use as such patients are usually in a reasonable amount of withdrawal by this time.

We are excited to announce that we now have a dynamic in-house hepatitis B & C treatment team run by a group of dedicated nurse practitioners, who will assess patients (including via Fibroscan) plus manage treatment. We also have a skilled physician who manages androgen deficiency in males (very common in opioid misuse including in Suboxone replacement therapy) in once-weekly testosterone clinics. Patients may access hepatitis treatment and testosterone replacement therapy while under our care, and may continue with hepatitis treatment even after transfer back to primary care provider for Suboxone care. So far patients may not be referred to us for hepatitis care only. We will let you know if this changes. We are pleased that we are able to offer these services at our clinic. We refer to IDCP in London for HIV care.

We would be very happy to discuss care of your patient with you. Shortly after a patient's second Clinic 217 visit, we will send a brief consult note to referring provider. We also will speak with you on the phone in order to provide a brief update. Once it is known a patient wishes to transfer back to referring source for ongoing care, we will complete and fax back a brief form describing current status of patient including a final dose date of current Suboxone prescription. Feel free



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to contact Clinic 217 to speak with a provider at any time, or to visit our clinic. We look forward to working with you.

Yours Truly,

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