

MEMO

DATE: May 24, 2023

TO: AHCCCS Contracted Managed Care Organizations and Opioid Treatment Providers (OTPs)

FROM: State Opioid Treatment Authority (SOTA)

SUBJECT: SAMHSA's Extended Flexibilities

To Whom It May Concern:

In March of 2020, SAMHSA issued an exemption to Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) that would allow each state to request "a blanket exception for all stable patients in an OTP to receive up to 28 days of Take-Home doses of the patient's medication for opioid use disorder."⁽¹⁾ Arizona requested this flexibility and maintained this flexibility throughout the course of the Public Health Emergency (PHE). On April 19, SAMHSA provided guidance to allow for Methadone take-home flexibility extensions for a period of one year from the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), or until such time that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publishes their final rules. Arizona has reviewed the option for the continuation of these flexibilities and has determined that we will be opting out effective June 16, 2023. This will allow providers to coordinate care for their members and begin the process of requesting these exceptions on a case by case basis and submission to the SOTA for individual approval. Additional information regarding this flexibility from SAMHSA can be found on the SAMHSA [Methadone Take-Home Flexibilities Extension](#) web page

Additionally, SAMHSA and the DEA issued an extension to the COVID-19 telemedicine flexibilities for prescribing controlled medications for six months while considering comments from the public, which is a temporary rule that extends flexibilities adopted during the PHE.

This temporary rule took effect on May 11, 2023, and will allow for the continuation of all flexibilities previously set through November 11, 2023. Arizona has evaluated this opportunity and has opted into the continuation of these flexibilities. Further information on this extension, as well as a full text to the temporary rule can be found on the SAMHSA [DEA, SAMHSA Telemedicine Flexibilities](#) web page.

Should you have any questions regarding the decisions listed above, please email GrantsManagement@azahcccs.gov. Please share this notification with your organizations to promote the messaging across the state.

(1) <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/otp-guidance-20200316.pdf>