

What is Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)?

- MAT is the use of medications for treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD) or alcohol use disorder in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies to provide a “whole-patient” approach to the treatment of substance use disorders, and can help some people to sustain recovery.
- For opioid use disorder, MAT, specifically buprenorphine and methadone, has the highest efficacy at preventing overdose death as compared to all other treatments, including naltrexone, counseling, and residential treatment.
- MAT is not a cure, it is a stabilizer by decreasing cravings, withdrawal symptoms and relapse.
- Increased risk of serious side effects when combining these MAT drugs with benzodiazepines – often prescribed to treat anxiety, insomnia, or other conditions.
- The three classes of drugs approved by the FDA for the treatment of opioid dependence are buprenorphine products (i.e. Subutex ®, Sublocade ®) and buprenorphine/naloxone (ie. Suboxone ®), Mu-opioid receptor partial agonist; methadone, Mu-opioid receptor full agonist; and naltrexone (ie. Vivitrol ®), Mu receptor partial agonist.

How is MAT Used in Virginia?

- Virginia offers all three classes of FDA approved medications to treat opioid use disorder in adults and adolescents.
- Methadone can ONLY be prescribed in a licensed Opioid Treatment Program (OTP). OTPs are licensed by DBHDS, the Board of Pharmacy, and the Federal agencies, DEA and SAMHSA.
- Buprenorphine can be prescribed in an OTP, an OBAT (office-based addiction treatment) and by any prescriber who holds a DEA Registration.
- Virginia currently has 50 licensed OTPs: five are public programs (Alexandria, Norfolk, Hampton Newport News, Portsmouth, and Richmond Behavioral Health Authority, one is at a VA Hospital and 44 private for profit OTPs.
- All 40 CSBs offer referrals for medication assisted treatment either in house or through an MOU with a private provider.
- Office Based Addiction Treatment (OBAT) operate throughout the Commonwealth however DBHDS does not license or regulate OBATs.

How is MAT Funded in Virginia?

- The federal State Opioid Response (SOR) has provided approximately \$8 million to CSBs for MAT.
- The SOR grant has also funded two mobile MAT/OBAT units.
- The FY 2024 General Fund appropriation for MAT is \$5,534,00.
- DBHDS provided \$500,000 to the private OTPs to assist the uninsured/underinsured Virginians struggling to remain in treatment.
- DBHDS has developed a program to support the use of MAT in the adolescent population, to provide training and consultation to work collaboratively with CSBs and other private providers.

DBHDS works to ensure behavioral health, substance use disorder, and developmental disability services are available to all Virginians who need them in the most community-oriented, integrated setting possible. More information is available at www.DBHDS.Virginia.Gov.