Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists
Medication-Assisted Treatment
Position Statement and Practice Considerations

The Substance Use Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act was enacted into law on October 24, 2018. This Act expands earlier legislation in the 2016 Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) to include Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) among providers able to prescribe medication-assisted treatment (MAT) to individuals suffering from opioid addiction.

Position
The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) supports increased patient access to safe, responsible use of MAT for the comprehensive treatment of substance and opioid use disorder. The AANA recognizes that the CRNA has an ethical obligation and professional responsibility for:

- Self-assessment of their knowledge and skills related to the comprehensive treatment of substance use disorders (SUD) and related somatic and/or mental health conditions;¹,²
- Developing and maintaining clinical competencies related to the care of individuals receiving MAT;¹,²
- Obtaining any necessary continuing education beyond the required 24 hours of training necessary in order to provide safe behavioral healthcare involving MAT.¹,²

Medication Assisted Therapy
MAT is the use of US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medications for the treatment of SUD, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a “whole-patient” approach for sustained recovery.³ MAT is one element of comprehensive, patient focused interdisciplinary care that must include behavioral therapy or counseling, patient education, individualized treatment with consideration of comorbid diseases or disorders, and careful ongoing patient assessment and evaluation throughout treatment and the post-treatment recovery period.

The provision of MAT services includes referring patients to higher levels of care as necessary; obtaining appropriate consents for records-exchange; coordinating with primary care and other health care providers; and routine and clinically-indicated drug toxicology screening to identify the presence of prescribed treatment medications, as well as the absence of other non-prescribed and/or illicit substances. These provisions are important for reinforcement of medication self-administration as prescribed, prevention of drug diversion, avoidance of drug-drug interactions, prevention of relapse, and maximized treatment benefits to support the patient’s long-term recovery.

Prescriptive Authority
CRNAs may prescribe MAT in states where they have prescriptive authority, consistent with state law. The CRNA must provide MAT in accordance with their professional state specific scope of practice, state and federal laws and regulations, and their respective facility’s institutional policies.²
Steps for Obtaining MAT Waiver

See updated MAT Waiver Information and Process to Apply at www.AANA.com/MAT

Further Education/Certification

SAMHSA’s Dear Colleague Letters for MAT providers offer regular communications to the opioid treatment community regarding clinical and regulatory issues related to opioid treatment.4

Note, in addition to the 24 hours of required training for the buprenorphine waiver, it is also recommended that MAT prescribers pursue additional SUD treatment and recovery education and training.

- The American Institute of Health Care Professionals (AIHCP) offers a Substance Abuse Practitioner Certification
- The Addictions Nursing Certification Board offers Certified Addictions Registered Nurse (CARN) and Certified Addiction Registered Nurse – Advance Practice (CARN-AP) certifications.
- The International Nurses Society on Addictions (IntNSA) offers an annual education conference for continuing education credit, and webinar trainings during throughout the year.
- The Journal of Addictions Nursing (JAN) is the official journal of the International Nurses Society on Addictions (IntNSA). It is a peer reviewed quarterly international journal publishing original articles on current research, issues, practices and innovations as they relate to the field of addictions. IntNSA membership comes with a free subscription to JAN.
- Many colleges and universities offer education certificates in behavioral health, mental health, substance abuse, etc.

References


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