
Heroin Detoxification

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This section describes participation standards and coverage for providers who render heroin detoxification services. For a listing of billing codes, refer to the *Heroin Detoxification Billing Codes* section in the appropriate Part 2 manual.

Participation Standards

Physician Requirements

All heroin detoxification services must be performed by or under the supervision and orders of a licensed physician. Ancillary personnel actually preparing and administering medications must be acting within the limits of their licenses or certificates.

The clinic operations for methadone services are periodically monitored by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). Staffing and handling of medications are both included in this monitoring.

For further information on federal and state laws governing controlled substances and the treatment of addiction, refer to the *Guidebook to Laws Governing the Practice of Medicine* published by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Medical Board of California.

Methadone

Detoxification by the use of methadone may be carried out only in an inpatient or outpatient facility approved by DHCS. Use of methadone for heroin detoxification by private physicians outside of the authorized facilities is not within Medi-Cal regulations, is not permitted by law and is not payable. The only exception to this required approval is the use of methadone for heroin detoxification in emergency situations where detoxification is part of the overall treatment of a severely ill or injured patient.

Non-Narcotic Pain Medications

Symptomatic heroin detoxification involving commonly used non-narcotic pain medications, tranquilizers, etc., in the usual manner and dosages is an acceptable form of treatment. Detoxification with minimal medicinal assistance or without medication are also legitimate forms of therapy. These services may be carried out in a licensed clinic or facility or in a physician's office without special approval.

Physician's Office Services

Only the following forms of heroin detoxification are covered when provided in a physician's office:

- Symptomatic heroin detoxification involving commonly used non-narcotic pain medication, tranquilizers, etc., in the usual manner and dosages
- Detoxification with minimal medicinal assistance or without medication

Coverage

Inpatient Coverage

Inpatient hospital services using methadone or non-narcotic drugs for the purposes of heroin detoxification are limited to patients with:

- Serious medical complications of addiction that require hospitalization (for example, overdoses), or
- Concurrent medical conditions that alone, or in combination with the problem of addiction, would require hospitalization (for example, severe acute hepatitis, major injury).

Hospital admissions, where considered appropriate, must be authorized by a Medi-Cal consultant or a state designated agency. Acute hospitalization, when medically necessary, will terminate when the associated medical problems can be treated at a lower level facility, or on an outpatient basis. Acute hospitalization will not continue solely for completion of a detoxification course.

Outpatient Coverage

Outpatient heroin detoxification services are defined as the administering or furnishing by a physician (or under the ongoing supervision of a physician) of either of the following:

- Methadone as a substitute narcotic drug in decreasing doses to reach a drug-free state in a period not to exceed 21 days, or
- Non-narcotic drugs to reduce or eliminate an individual's dependence on heroin or other morphine-like drugs over a period not to exceed 21 days.

The 21-day course is defined as 21 consecutive (calendar) days, even if some treatment days are missed.

All outpatient heroin detoxification services require authorization. Claims for services using HCPCS code H0014 without authorization will be denied.

<<Legend>>

<<Symbols used in the document above are explained in the following table.>>

Symbol	Description
<<	This is a change mark symbol. It is used to indicate where on the page the most recent change begins.
>>	This is a change mark symbol. It is used to indicate where on the page the most recent change ends.