

# OPIOID CRISIS IN NATIVE AMERICA FACT SHEET SERIES

## #2 | *Benefits of Medication Assisted Treatment*

### An Overview

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) is an evidence-based, holistic approach that combines medications with counseling and behavioral therapies. Research spanning more than three decades has demonstrated the effectiveness of MAT for many individuals with alcohol and opioid use disorders. As part of a comprehensive substance use disorder treatment program, MAT can increase retention in treatment and reduce rates of substance use, return to use, overdose deaths, criminal activity and repeated arrests, HIV transmission and risk behavior, and pregnancy-related complications. Together with a range of supportive services, MAT can help patients achieve stability and focus on other aspects of their recovery, such as obtaining employment or housing or enhancing their parenting skills.

### The Research

Misunderstanding MAT has led to slow adoption, so education and awareness are crucial:

- MAT medications do not cause a “high” but instead MAT reduces drug cravings and prevents relapse.
- MAT reduces drug overdose deaths and recidivism among individuals within the justice system.
- MAT increases a patient’s ability to gain and maintain employment
- Parents with opioid use disorders involved in child welfare who received MAT had a significantly higher chance of retaining custody of their children than those who did not receive MAT. **One year of MAT increased the likelihood of retaining child custody by 120%**
- Use of MAT (naltrexone) in a New York City jail decreased illicit opioid use by more than 50% following release.

### Types of Medication Assisted Treatment

The FDA has approved methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone to treat Opioid use disorders and acamprosate, disulfiram (antabuse), and naltrexone for alcohol use disorder. The FDA has not approved any medications to treat marijuana, amphetamine, or cocaine use disorders.

Only appropriately qualified health care professionals should decide whether Wellness Court participants need medication, how to provide the medication in the context of other clinical services, and the conditions in which each participant should reduce or stop taking the medication.

Clinical practice guidelines recommend delivering psychosocial supports, such as counseling and case management, in conjunction with medications. To adhere to these guidelines, the medical and other treatment providers on the Wellness Court team must collaborate and communicate with one another to monitor participants’ receipt of MAT. These providers should review patients’ treatment progress and ensure that they receive comprehensive, coordinated treatment planning.



The Tribal Law and Policy Institute provides free training and technical assistance to planning and operational tribal adult, DUI/DWI, juvenile, and family Healing to Wellness Courts (drug courts).

We seek to assist Wellness Courts in the development, implementation, and sustainability of program practices for increased program effectiveness, and for the long-term success of their participants.

We provide free onsite and offsite training and technical assistance.

Contact: [wellness@tlpi.org](mailto:wellness@tlpi.org)  
or (323) 650-5467





## Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts Opioid Webpage

The Tribal Law and Policy Institute manages a comprehensive website for Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts. The website contains an opioid page with the latest research and resources relevant to tribal communities and Wellness Courts. The page contains links to resources, webinar recordings, publication downloads, and information on upcoming trainings.

**Link:** [www.WellnessCourts.org/Opioid\\_cfm](http://www.WellnessCourts.org/Opioid_cfm)



## SAMHSA Webpage on Medication-Assisted Treatment

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) maintains a comprehensive webpage on Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT). This page includes research, training resources, and an opioid treatment program directory. The page serves as a portal for physicians, researchers, pharmacists, patients, and others interested in learning more about MAT.

**Link:** [www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment](http://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment)



## Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorders in Drug Court

A substantial proportion of adult drug court participants have a moderate to severe opioid use disorder. This fact sheet provides a brief overview of opioid use disorders, medication-assisted treatment (MAT) available for opioid use disorders, and the best practices and legal standards for MAT in drug courts. *National Drug Court Institute (Aug. 2016).*

**Link:** [www.ndci.org/resources/the-responsible-use-of-mat-for-treatment-court-participants/](http://www.ndci.org/resources/the-responsible-use-of-mat-for-treatment-court-participants/)



## Webinar: Medication Assisted Treatment Introduction

The National Drug Court Institute (NDCI) with funding from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the White House in collaboration with American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP) developed an online training curriculum designed to educate drug court professionals on medication assisted treatments (MAT) for substance use disorders with a major focus on opioid use disorders. Nine modules were developed and are available at this website.

*National Drug Court Institute*

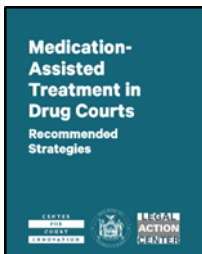
**Link:** <http://ndcrc.org/medication-assisted-treatment-course/>



## Adult Drug Courts and Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Dependence

This guide highlights the use of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder in drug courts. It reviews effective medications, including methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone. The guide also provides strategies to increase the use of MAT in drug court programs.

**Link:** <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4852.pdf>



## Medication Assisted Treatment in Drug Courts

This report is designed to help drug court practitioners understand medication assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid addiction and to provide strategies for incorporating MAT into their practice.

Legal Action Center, Center for Court Innovation, and New York State Unified Court System's Office of Policy and Planning (2015).

**Link:** [www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/Medication-Assisted%20Treatment%20in%20Drug%20Courts.pdf](http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/Medication-Assisted%20Treatment%20in%20Drug%20Courts.pdf)



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