Deregulating Buprenorphine for Opioid Use Disorder Can Save Lives, Addiction Experts in New Orleans Say

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Buprenorphine is an effective treatment for opioid use disorder. It is combined with naloxone in the drug Suboxone for a greater effect. Despite the fact that it is far safer compared to oxycodone and Fentanyl, physicians are not allowed to prescribe buprenorphine without getting additional training and a special license.

Doctors in New Orleans who want to prescribe the drug also have to agree to allow agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration or DEA to inspect their patient records. This is why in the midst of an opioid epidemic, addiction experts believe that deregulating buprenorphine could save many lives.

Opioid use disorder can cause tremendous suffering for people with it. Addiction not only affects the person, but it also affects their loved ones, and even the community around them. On an individual level, addiction is even more devastating, because it creates severe physical and psychological effects. Opioid abuse can start by simply misusing a prescription, and it could end with addiction, dependence, withdrawal, or fatal overdose.

Physicians who specialize in addiction medicine are aware of the transformative effects of treatment,

including those that make use of buprenorphine. Combined with naloxone, it is sold as Suboxone. People who take it report that they no longer feel compelled to use illicit opioids. This helps them focus on their recovery. It also allows them to restore relationships, which may have been ruined by addiction.

Despite the fact that buprenorphine has been available as an effective treatment for opioid use disorder for 17 years, overdose deaths involving opioids have increased. Opioid overdose is now the number one cause of accidental death in the US. Nearly 50,000 people in the US died from opioid overdoses in 2017.

Since 1999, nearly half a million Americans have died to opioid overdoses. Addiction experts and doctors believe that one possible solution to the epidemic is hidden in plain sight. It may be as easy as removing governmental restrictions on prescribing buprenorphine to treat addiction.

Before the turn of the 21st century, those with opioid use disorder could only get effective medical treatment through tightly regulated opioid treatment programs that administered methadone.

Another barrier that is keeping people from getting the right treatment for addiction is the stigma. This social barrier from both physician and patient perspectives can hinder the recovery process. Some people don?t seek treatment even if they?re suffering from addiction because of this stigma.

Treatment professionals in New Orleans suggest that the media and even clinicians should avoid using words like ?addict? or ?drug abuser? because it only strengthens the idea that addicted people are bad. And so recovery should not be referred to as ?getting clean?. This language would be unacceptable for any other medical condition.

One of the reasons opioid abuse became an epidemic is a fact that addiction was not immediately considered a medical condition. Misunderstandings about the role of medication in treating opioid use disorder also continue to influence treatment decisions. Click the link to see New Orleans's top rehab placement programs.

Decades of research prove the effectiveness of buprenorphine at increasing remission rates and preventing overdose deaths. Still, the myth persists that people who take buprenorphine are simply replacing one drug with another, and are therefore still addicted.

Deregulation of buprenorphine may help in many ways. It would eliminate the extra steps needed for clinicians to prescribe the medication. It would even encourage training programs to ensure that clinicians are better prepared to prescribe it.

For patients, it would reduce barriers in terms of finding prescribers, since any clinician with a DEA license could prescribe it. Deregulation can also help normalize prescribing buprenorphine. Finally, it will also help

reduce the stigma associated with addiction.

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid addiction, it is important to seek help. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in the fight against drug abuse. But because every individual is affected by addiction differently, a comprehensive program tailored to their specific needs is necessary. Look for a nearby addiction treatment facility today and find out how drug treatment programs work.

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