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What's Happening NOW?

Issue #2 OTPG QUARTERLY newsletter

By Nicole McConnell | South Georgia Treatment Center

OTPG has once again been hard at work planning and implementing positive change for Georgia OTPs and the people we serve! We have exciting things in the forefront that are going to help launch OTPs to the front lines in the drug treatment

community across our great state!

So what have we been up to? What can you expect to be a part of in this 2nd quarter of 2009?

Wow! Way to Go! OTPG requested and received a meeting with The Office of Regulatory Services (ORS) to receive clarification on State regulatory requirements.

On May 7th 2009, a meeting was held between OTPG board members and Kathy Wilcox to discuss our regulatory requirements.

The intent of this meeting was to help ensure that all of Georgia OTPs are held to the same interpretation of

our regulations and high standards of care for the people we serve.

How did the meeting turn out? We had very positive results! Ms. Kathy Wilcox was receptive to our concerns and is willing to provide OTPs with a training to address some of the most common issues found during state inspections. Ms. Wilcox is hoping to be a part of the OTPG fall conference this year.

GETTING INVOLVED! The Veterans Conference has been scheduled for June 17, 2009 in Forsyth, Ga. and we are invited and encouraged to attend. The Division of MHDDAD, Office of Addictive Diseases, has collaborated with stakeholders from the Armed Forces, Department of Veteran Services, Department of Veteran Affairs, and the Community Providers of Mental Health and Addictive Diseases Services to plan this meeting and discuss how to best address the needs of those returning home. The areas in which some of our service men and women are returning from are also some of the world's largest

manufacturers and distributors of heroin. Our services are needed to help those that have served us and OTPG wants to encourage your participation and involvement.

TIME FLIES! OTPG has already begun to schedule and plan our annual fall conference! As of now we are considering a date for the conference in late October or early November! Stay tuned to the OTPG quarterly newsletter for more details!

LAST BUT NOT LEAST! We need your support! Everyday each OTP faces similar as well as their own unique challenges. It is through these challenges that each facility learns and grows. Tell us your concerns. What do you feel would benefit Georgia OTPs and the people we serve? What kind of training are you interested in?

What interesting community activities do you feel would benefit OTPs? In short, we want to know what's going on in your neck of the woods. Log on to your website and contact us.

Tell us what you think!

FYI

TOP 7 ORS ISSUES

1. Treatment Planning
2. Training Requirements
3. Employee testing (i.e. TB, drug screens, etc.)
4. Criminal background checks for staff
5. Patient Assessment
6. Quality Improvement
7. Qualifications for faculty staff

Top 7 OTP ISSUES

1. Case-note entry requirements
2. Z-tag reference
3. DSM-IV reference
4. Pharmacist supervision of nurses
5. General interpretation vs. actual interpretation of the regulations
6. Training requirements for Physicians
7. Staff training requirements

CMA=Certified Methadone Advocate

What is a Certified Methadone Advocate?

Most of us already realize the stigma that goes with methadone maintenance therapy. We are told time and again that this type of recovery is “substituting one drug for another.” We hear rumors of possible new legislation that may affect our treatment programs one way or another. Some may wonder how methadone patients can be treated in the workforce. Can they be discriminated against?

Do we just sit back and let “life happen” or can something be done about these issues?

These are just some of the issues a Certified Methadone Advocate can help address. The National Alliance of Methadone Advocates (NAMA) was formed in 1988, and set out to accomplish the following goals taken from the NAMA website: www.methadone.org

- To eliminate discrimination toward methadone patients.
- To create a more positive image about methadone maintenance treatment.
- To help preserve patient's dignity and their rights.
- To make treatment available on demand to every person who needs it.
- To empower methadone patients with a strong public voice.
- To give a human face to methadone treatment.

Certified Methadone Advocates (CMA's) have worked hard to achieve those goals over the past years, but there is much more to be done. Whether you are a patient, a treatment center director, a counselor, or another professional in the field, you should consider the idea of advocacy, and educate

Certified Methadone Advocacy Course

yourself. A great place to start is the NAMA website, www.methadone.org

I recently went through the CMA course offered by NAMA. It was extremely informative, focusing on the subject of opioid addiction and a fairly wide range of related subjects. We learned what goes on the brain of an opioid addicted person. We learned how the medication works, and how it is best used to aid recovery of addicts. We also discussed the importance of additional treatment aids such as support and counseling & learning tools to deal with life's every day stresses. We learned that regulations at the federal, state and local clinic levels are important and must be followed. Along the same lines we learned how new legislation could possibly affect those regulations and therefore affect both the patients and treatment professionals. We also learned that we CAN BE a part of the decisions that can affect all of our lives. We can and do have a say in how our treatment is viewed and handled by both the general public and our government.

A CMA can also advocate on behalf of the individual who may have an issue with their recovery. This is not to be confused with the CMA being a “complaint box.” Yes, an advocate can be a liaison between patient and treatment center to help resolve possible issues. The CMA can also help a patient who may have issues with their job, or family or friends. However, the CMA is not a tool to be used for either party as leverage to help bolster one's point of view. The Certified Methadone Advocate is there to bring fair, educated and responsible help to a given situation.

If as a patient you feel methadone has helped change your life in a positive way (as I have), consider learning more about advocacy. If you are a professional in the field of MMT and are concerned with the state of your profession, consider learning more about advocacy. I assure you there are those out there who working every day to make changes that may well effect your life or your profession. Some of these changes may not necessarily be the most positive in your eyes. The only way to have your opinion heard is to get educated yourself and help to educate others. To learn more about Certified Methadone Advocacy or to get information on taking the course and becoming an advocate yourself, please go the National Alliance of Methadone Advocates (NAMA) website at: www.methadone.org.

We ALL owe it to ourselves to become active.

by: Steve Morgan



Community Hot Topics real help = real hope

By Robin Rathbun | Robert W Dail Memorial
Treatment Center

Community Forums: Who, What, Why, Where, When and How?

Ignorance is NOT bliss! Our patients live in a world of ignorance and prejudice against the treatment that has saved so many lives. One way to chip away at the stigma is to invite stakeholders to a Community Forum about WHAT? whatever you feel will attract the most interest and can produce questions and answers about medication-assisted treatment. For example: "Prescription Drug Abuse", "The Number One Public Health Problem in the Nation", "Demand Reduction".

WHO do you want to attend? Anyone who has influence over your patients' lives - family, friends, employers, health professionals, law enforcement, other "helper" agencies such as mental health, domestic violence, child and family services, court officials? Do you want to concentrate on professionals/agencies only or the general public, families, and friends? Collaboration is ALWAYS a plus - who could you invite to do this WITH you? A prominent congregation? Another agency or advocacy group whose issue is affected by substance abuse? You may have allies you haven't thought of.

A successful forum requires adequate planning which means TIME. Take the time to make sure you can get sufficient publicity and that your date/time does not conflict with any major events in the community. Location is also important: neutral ground has certain advantages, but if your program has sufficient space, an "Open House" theme may arouse curiosity and dispel some fears.

NOTCA is offering some financial support to programs willing to thoughtfully tackle this thorny problem. There are plenty of other resources available to help organize and plan an event. Contact Ali McCorkle or Robin Rathbun for ideas and information. Contact (706) 552-0688.

On SALE NOW!

The OTPG videos "Exploring the World of Opioid Addiction" are for sale. \$40.00 for non-members of OTPG and \$10.00 for membership clinics" Call Joelyn Alfred (770) 840-9912.

AATOD

AATOD Conference in New York 2009



The AATOD conference in New York City was fantastic!! Several nationalities were represented and the training information was plentiful and enlightening. We encourage Georgians to start preparing for AATOD's next national conference in Chicago (2010). Pictured left to right: Stacey Pearce and Joelyn Alfred (OTPG), Mark Parrino(AATOD), and Charlene, a new friend.

AATOD Update what you need to know

By Stacey Pearce | GPA Treatment, Macon

We missed you at the AATOD Board Meeting in New York on April 24th!!! At each conference, AATOD holds the Board Meeting open to the public; you can come to experience how exciting and informative these meetings are for yourself. **Save the date, the October 2010 meeting is in Chicago.**

During the meeting, Dr. Westley Clark presented information CSAT has gathered from the voluntary reporting of deaths in clinics. Preliminary review of data shows that a small number of deaths are related to the induction phase of treatment. Two cases were presented. The first case was a patient whose dose was increased ten milligrams per day for the patient's first four days and the patient died on day five of dosing.

The second patient was dosed at thirty milligrams the first day and seventy milligrams the second day, and the patient died on day two. Both cases support a slow, individualized dosage induction period that is

closely monitored by clinic staff. AATOD has provided guidance through a policy statement found on www.AATOD.org and Dr. Clark recommends looking at TIP 43 for further guidance to supplement the AATOD policy statement.

Georgia Methadone Treatment Awareness Day was presented as a model for other states to organize an Awareness Day of their own. Steps to take to make it happen and the lessons we learned on how to organize the day for the best impact were shared by me and Joelyn Alfred. Everyone in attendance was excited to hear about our success and hopefully Georgia will not be the only state with an Awareness Day for long!

The final news piece of import from the meeting concerns Cardiac QTc. AATOD officially released their Guidance Statement concerning this issue, which is also available on the AATOD website. If there are questions in regards to QTc and how to demonstrate action towards addressing the issue, please contact me at (478) 788-0066.



Methadone Treatment Awareness Day

"Eradicating the
Stigmas that have
existed for too long"

Thanks to all of you, Treatment Methadone Awareness Day was a successful day at the Georgia Capital Building. Due to the recognition and ongoing accolades, many other states have been encouraged to do the same.

Upcoming Training EVENTS

By Ali McCorkle | DM & ADR, Inc., Athens

HIV EIS Program is offering a Rapid HIV Testing Booster: June 3 OR June 4 at River Edge in Macon. This training is only open to those who have completed the Rapid HIV Testing Training. Visit www.hiveis.com.

HIV EIS will also offer the HIV Prevention Counseling & Testing Course on August 13-14. This is open to new participants. Implementing a testing program at your site is a requirement for attendance.

Veterans Initiative Project: 6/17 in Forsyth, GA.

Contact Von Wrighten at 770-657-2384.

National Opioid Treatment Clinicians Association will hold the following training sessions. Visit www.notca.com for registration information.

Opiate Dependency & Pregnancy:	6/12	Atlanta
Pharmacology:	6/19	Atlanta
Clinical Supervision:	6/26	Atlanta
Women & Opioid Treatment:	7/3	Atlanta
Pain & the Substance Abuser:	7/17	Atlanta
Clinical Supervision:	8/14	Atlanta
Solution Focused Therapy:	8/28	Atlanta

Georgia School of Addictive Studies Conference:

8/31-9/4 in Savannah, GA. www.thegeorgiaschool.org

Opioid Treatment Providers of Georgia annual conference:

10/30 at Lake Lanier Islands. www.otpgeorgia.org

GACA Fall Training & Education Conference:

10/11-10/15 in Toccoa, GA-Visit www.gaca.org for more information. Free internet CEU's: www.hepeducate.org, <http://www.oasas.state.ny.us>, <http://www.bu.edu/aodhealth/cme.html>

Come Join Us! become an OTPG member

The membership dues are listed below.

The amount due will be based on the current patient census and will be renewed annually.

- 100 patients or less: \$100
- 101-150 patients: \$300
- 151 or more patients: \$500

Each quarter OTPG holds a meeting at a volunteer facility site. Please call us for the next meeting date and location. We hope that each of you will consider supporting our organization. The success of OTPG depends on the input from all providers and quality care givers.

Please refer to the contact information below:

OTPG
Opioid Treatment
Providers of Georgia
1710 Commerce Highway
Athens, GA 30607
(770) 840-9912



Get to know the OTPG board members visit www.otpgeorgia.org

The benefits available to members of OTPG:

- Membership with the American Association for the Treatment for Opioid Dependence (AATOD)
- National recognition beyond AATOD membership
- Lunch and Learn projects
- Annual fall conference at a discounted price
- Affiliation with community organizations
- Updated state and federal information to include statistics, changes to regulations, available funds, etc.
- Chance to network within our industry
- The ability for patients and providers to link to individual sites to obtain specific information regarding facility treatment services

OTPG QUARTERLY
1710 Commerce Highway
Athens, GA 30607