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The BOP Addiction Service Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST)

Te Whatu Ora
 Health New Zealand
 Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty

For all the terms and conditions relating to OST please see the attached BOPAS client fact sheets or the OST and You handbook.

OST is designed to assist people who are seeking treatment for opioid dependency. To be eligible to receive opioid substitution treatment you need to be diagnosed as opioid dependent, consent to treatment and agree to comply with the conditions of treatment (Contract/Consent form that clients are required to sign).

Methadone or Buprenorphine/Naloxone is prescribed by specialist addiction doctor/s, and treatment is delivered with the support of a case management team (i.e., your case manager, and others such as the medical officer, clinical team leader and the clinical lead).

In New Zealand the objectives of OST are in line with the National Drug Policy, and aim to improve the health of New Zealanders by minimising the harms associated with the use of opioid drugs, and to:

- contribute to improving the physical and psychological health of OST consumers and aspects of their personal and social functioning
- reduce the spread of infectious diseases associated with injecting drug use, especially Hepatitis B and C and HIV/AIDS
- reduce the mortality (deaths) and morbidity (disease, ill-health) resulting from the misuse of opioids
- reduce episodes of illegal and other harmful drug use
- reduce crime associated with opioid use and assist people to successfully withdraw from opioid substitution treatment if appropriate and desired by the consumer (see current Ministry of Health Practice Guidelines for Opioid Substitution Treatment).

The team at BOPAS consists of:

- **Case Managers (CM):** support and monitor the client's OST treatment
- **Medical Officers (MO):** specialist addiction doctors who attend to all the prescribing and medical aspects of OST treatment (Please note: the MOs cannot write prescriptions for any other health care needs you might have – you need your own GP for that. Changes to your OST prescription can only be made by the BOPAS MO).
- **Clinical Lead:** along with the Clinical Team Leader is part of the management team and supports case managers.

Note: OST is one of the services provided by BOPAS, which is a health and hospital services division of Te Whatu Ora Bay of Plenty.

- **OST Administrator:** clerical staff that provides administrative back up needed to run BOPAS OST.
- **GP Liaison Nurse:** provides all the necessary back up to the community GPs who are authorised to prescribe OST on behalf of BOPAS, and the community pharmacists who dispense OST to clients.
- **Clinical Team Leader:** is the manager of BOPAS – this includes all BOPAS services, including OST.
- **Psychologist:** a referral to our psychologist is available should the MDT determine this would benefit your recovery.

Aspects of OST is also provided by:

- **Community Pharmacists:** Where possible OST is dispensed from a pharmacy in your local area. These pharmacists liaise with BOPAS, and case managers will often send things to you via the community pharmacist
- **General Practitioners (GPs):** BOPAS can (via the Ministry of Health) authorise GPs to prescribe OST for individual clients, in what is called a “Shared Care Agreement”. In most instances, responsibility for your OST will be transferred to your GP once you have achieved some of your early treatment goals. BOPAS is still responsible for ensuring your treatment is safely and appropriately delivered and BOPAS monitors the treatment GPs provide.

BOPAS OST Description

- **Harm Reduction Approach:** BOPAS OST is guided by a harm reduction approach. This means that all aspects of the service are aimed at reducing harm to the individual, family/whanau and the community. Treatment outcomes (i.e., those listed on the first page) are defined and can be measured to show that there is a reduction in harm due to the treatment provided. Abstinence is not the philosophy of the service. Treatment is more about setting and achieving immediate practical goals developed by you and your case manager. However, if your own goal is to become abstinent, BOPAS will support you to achieve this goal.
- **Comprehensive Assessment:** BOPAS OST employs a biopsychosocial treatment model, which means we address the physical (bio), psychological (psycho) and social needs of the individual. As part of this assessment process, you will have an assessment with a case manager and then a medical assessment with the medical officer (doctor). These assessments must be completed before you can be accepted and get your first dose of OST. Throughout treatment you’ll be assessed as to whether OST is appropriate, your dose is okay and whether you need other support services etc.
- **Individual doses of OST:** Although people might start on the same dose, OST doses will vary from person to person because you are medically assessed to ensure your dose is therapeutically appropriate for you. Assessment and review of your dose occurs throughout your treatment.
- **A long-term treatment approach:** It is envisaged that a client will spend at least two years in treatment with an average of 5 – 7 years. It is quite acceptable for clients to remain in treatment for longer than the average.
- **Provision of Support Services:** Your case manager can assist you by referring you to other relevant health and social services. Let your case manager know what you need.
- **OST services delivered in the community:** Once stabilised it’s envisaged that most clients will eventually move to GP Shared Care (where your OST is handled by your GP. Consequently, you’ll need a GP for this to occur).
- **Evidence-based practice:** OST has been well researched, and its effectiveness well demonstrated. BOPAS is committed to providing a quality service that is informed by international and national research and is responsive to the consumers and community.

Stages of treatment

Admission: Encompasses the time from a client's first point of contact with the service, through the assessment process, to being accepted and having your first OST dose. The kinds of things you'll be asked about are:

- Your health and your substance use
- Other personal circumstances relevant to OST
- You will be asked to provide blood and/or urine samples

Stabilisation: You are assigned a case manager who works with the medical officer and pharmacist to ensure that your OST dose is appropriate to you. Your case manager will help you work out what other relevant services you may need and will co-ordinate your overall OST. Time spent in the stabilisation phase varies from person to person, because it depends on individual needs. In the first month you can expect to attend appointments with your case manager weekly, and in some cases, this may be more frequent (see OST Client Information Fact Sheets for more information).

Specialist Maintenance: When you've achieved your goals in the stabilisation phase you'll update your treatment plan, which includes how often you'll attend appointments (e.g., monthly). Throughout the specialist maintenance phase of treatment, you will need to see a Medical Officer/MO at least once every 3 months as this is a legal requirement (Misuse of Drugs Act 1975 (s) 24).

General Practitioner Shared Care (GPSC): It is envisaged that most clients will eventually transfer from the BOPAS specialist service to an authorised GP in the community who will prescribe your medication and oversee your OST. The BOPAS GP Liaison Nurse works with the GP to ensure you receive the treatment and support you need.

You'll need to see the GP at least once every 3 months (again, this is a legal requirement). Initially the GP will require you to attend monthly appointments. Moving to GP Care does not automatically mean you will get more takeaways, but it might make your takeaway regime more flexible.

Privacy and Informed Consent: BOPAS OST follows the principles of the Privacy Act (1993), the Health Information Privacy Code (1994) and the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumer Rights Act (1996). BOPAS are part of Te Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty and as such there are policies and protocols that clearly outline BOPAS obligations to you as a consumer of the Te Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty.

Clients must be given full and ongoing information such as research and literature regarding treatment, including any associated risks, negative consequences, and disclosure of information.

Need to know more?

If you need more information about BOPAS OST you can telephone your Case Manager, or if you have not been allocated a Case Manager you could speak with the OST duty clinician on phone: 07 579 8391 or free-phone 0800 800 508.

*Te Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty has an active commitment
to the Treaty of Waitangi and the improvement of Māori health.*

**Tauranga Hospital 07 579 8000, Whakatāne Hospital 07 306 0999
www.bopdhb.health.nz**

Design & Print Dept - February 2023