

Loosening MOUD Restrictions During COVID-19

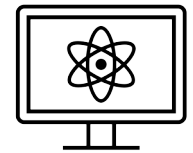
Why?

Because **individuals with opioid use disorder have heightened risk factors for COVID-19**, states and organizations made changes to restrictions on access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD).



What changed?

- Allowing for **at-home doses**
- Allowing practitioners to begin and maintain treatments via **telemedicine**
- Allowing **telehealth across state lines**
- Relaxing the **X waiver requirement**



What are the effects?

- **Potential to reduce the opioid cascade**
- **Potential risks**, including misuse of medication
- **Need for additional research** on implications of loosening restrictions
- **Opportunity to decenter a concern about misuse**



TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ COVID-19 made it necessary to loosen restrictions on MOUD access, including allowing individuals to administer doses at home, access practitioners virtually, and work with practitioners across state lines.
- ✓ These changes have created a large-scale natural experiment.
- ✓ To understand the effects of loosened regulations on MOUD use (if any), future research is needed.

Sources: Nunes, E, V., Levin, F, R., Reilly, M, P., & El-Bassel, N. (2021). Medication treatment for opioid use disorder in the age of COVID-19: Can new regulations modify the opioid cascade? *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 122.