

POLICY BULLETIN

No. 18-04

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Effective Date: Immediately

Subject: Urinalysis Requirements for Narcotic Treatment Programs

This policy bulletin serves to set forth a new policy concerning urinalysis requirements for narcotic treatment programs under [28 Pa. Code § 715.14 – Urine testing](#).

28 Pa. Code § 715.14(a) – Narcotic treatment programs are required to *complete* an initial drug-screening urinalysis for each prospective patient.

Historically, the word *complete* was interpreted to mean that a narcotic treatment program was required to receive the results of the urinalysis before initiating medication assisted treatment (MAT).

Under this policy bulletin, narcotic treatment programs must comply with [28 Pa. Code § 715.14\(a\)](#) and complete an initial drug-screening. However, they are no longer required to wait for the result of the drug-screening to initiate MAT.

The Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) views the decision to initiate MAT prior to receiving the results of the drug-screening as a clinical decision to be made individually by each facility's medical director.

DDAP recommends that clinicians take into consideration the factors surrounding each individual patient when deciding to initiate treatment prior to receiving urinalysis results. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- the patient's medical history,
- the appropriateness of the treatment for the patient,
- potential interactions with both lawful and illicit drugs, with particular emphasis on the interactions between methadone and benzodiazepines, fentanyl, and other opioids,
- the unique needs and proclivities of each patient, as well as
- other risk factors.

Questions regarding this Policy Bulletin and exception requests can be directed to Wenona Wake, Bureau Director for Quality Assurance for Prevention and Treatment, Division of D&A Program Licensing at (717)783-8675 or wwake@pa.gov.