



Health
Canada

Santé
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Healthy Environments
and Consumer Safety
Branch

Direction générale,
Santé environnementale et
sécurité des consommateurs

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Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

2017-03-17

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To Whom it May Concern,

On February 24, 2017 the Office of Controlled Substances (OCS) sent a letter and a draft section 56 (s.56) class exemption for practitioners prescribing methadone to in-patients in a hospital setting in order to provide an opportunity for concerns regarding the proposed issuance of a s.56 class exemption. The OCS would like to thank everyone who took the time to consider the impact of the issuance of the draft s.56 class exemption.

Before March 6, 2017 stakeholders were encouraged to share their concerns regarding the issuance of a s. 56 class exemption which impacted the issuance of temporary exemptions for methadone. Comments were received from various stakeholders, but no major concerns regarding the issuance of the s.56 class exemption were expressed by stakeholders.

Therefore, please be advised that the OCS, has issued the section 56 class exemption which will affect practitioners practicing in a hospital. As of date of issuance of the exemption, practitioners will no longer have to obtain a temporary methadone s.56 exemption in order to continue the treatment of a patient who was admitted to a hospital and have been prescribed methadone.

In response to comments received and in order to provide clarity, the section 56 exemption does not apply to federal, provincial or municipal correctional facilities.

As previously mentioned, the s.56 class exemption will only apply when all its conditions are met. The conditions of the exemption are as follows:

- the patient must be taking methadone prior to their hospitalization;
- the practitioner must be licensed as a nurse practitioner or to practice medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine;
- the patient must be under the practitioner's professional treatment at a hospital;
- the provision of the methadone must be necessary to ensure the continuation of the patient's methadone treatment;
- the practitioner must not be named in an active notice of restriction from Health Canada regarding narcotics;
- provincial/territorial guidelines or conditions must be followed; and,
- methadone must be dispensed or prepared by the hospital pharmacy or by the hospital affiliated pharmacy.

Thus, this exemption does not apply to practitioners, including those practicing in a hospital, prescribing to patients who are not already being prescribed methadone.

We would again like to highlight that general methadone s.56 exemptions (i.e. those issued to a practitioner who prescribes methadone in their practice) will not be impacted by the issuance of this class exemption.

A copy of the finalized s.56 class exemption is attached for your reference. It is our intention to post the exemption on the Health Canada website.

In regards to the College's continual collaboration, once more the OCS extends its thanks for your contribution. Please do not hesitate to contact our Office via email at exemption@hc-sc.gc.ca if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours Sincerely,



Carol Anne Chénard
Acting Director
Office of Controlled Substances
Healthy Environments and Consumer
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Health Canada

Attachment