

Sacramento Public Health Advisory Board

c/o Sacramento County Public Health
7001-A East Parkway, Suite 600
Sacramento, CA 95823

September 15, 2025

Sacramento County Board of Supervisors

700 H Street, Suite 2450
Sacramento, CA 95814

Letter of Support – EMS Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Hotline and Expansion of EMS Buprenorphine in Sacramento County

Dear Supervisor Phil Serna and Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the **Sacramento Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB)**, we are writing to express our **strong support to approve** the grant presented by the Sacramento County EMS Agency. The grant will help expand access to EMS buprenorphine and will the launch of a new, low-barrier **EMS Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Hotline**, developed in partnership with the **Sacramento County EMS Agency**. This project, funded through a competitive grant, represents a bold and evidence-based strategy to reduce opioid-related deaths and improve access to treatment for people in crisis.

Access to MAT is one of the biggest obstacles to preventing overdose deaths. Nationwide studies have shown that 78% of patients with Opioid addiction are never able to access medical treatment and that women, ethnic minorities, and people from low socioeconomic status have disproportionately less access to care¹. The EMS MAT hotline will make accessing medical care as easy as one phone call and will make a major impact in improving access to MAT for patients in need.

The hotline will have 3 main goals.

1. **Rapid free access to MAT within 24 hours.** Patients will have an appointment or be see talk to a doctor within 24 hours and, if eligible, will receive buprenorphine prescription. All access will be free regardless of insurance or documentation status.
2. **Up to 90 days of telemedicine-based addiction treatment** designed to provide stability while patients are bridged to long-term local care;

¹ Use of Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Among Adults With Past-Year Opioid Use Disorder in the US, 2021, JAMA, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2807964>

3. **Social support and care navigation services** to connect individuals to local clinics and stable recovery resources in the community.

This model is based on successful implementations in other jurisdictions. For example:

- In **Seattle, Washington**, a similar low-barrier MAT hotline treated nearly **1,000 patients** in its first year alone, demonstrating strong demand and clinical success.
- In the **State of Illinois**, a comparable program treated **almost 3,000 patients** over two years.

These examples show that a hotline-based model is not only feasible—it is highly effective.

Importantly, this program is grounded in well-established medical evidence: **Medication Assisted Treatment saves lives**. Studies consistently show that patients receiving MAT are:

- **Far less likely to use opioids** compared to those not on medication²;
- **Up to 71% less likely to experience a fatal overdose**³;
- More likely to remain in treatment, avoid emergency department visits, and achieve long-term recovery⁴.

Despite this, many individuals—especially those reached by EMS—still face enormous barriers to accessing MAT. EMS initiated MAT and the low barrier hotline directly addresses those gaps by offering low-threshold, compassionate care to individuals who often fall through the cracks of the healthcare system.

The PHAB believes this initiative is a critical enhancement to existing EMS-led efforts such as **field-initiated buprenorphine** and **naloxone leave-behind programs**. Together, these efforts form a comprehensive, front-line strategy to combat the opioid epidemic and improve public health outcomes in Sacramento County.

We respectfully urge the Board of Supervisors to endorse and support the EMS MAT Hotline initiative. It is a cost-effective, evidence-based, and life-saving intervention that will bring immediate benefit to individuals and families across our community.

² Emergency Department–Initiated Buprenorphine/Naloxone Treatment for Opioid Dependence <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2279713>

³ Easy Buprenorphine Prescribing for Everyone, <https://oafp.org/wp-content/uploads/Easy-BUP-Rx-OR.pdf>

⁴ Emergency Department–Initiated Buprenorphine/Naloxone Treatment for Opioid Dependence <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2279713>

Sincerely,
Sacramento County Public Health Advisory Board