Diagnosis of Moderate to Severe Opioid Use Disorder

Assess for opioid type and last use

Patients taking methadone may have withdrawal reactions to buprenorphine up to 72 hours after last use
Consider consultation before starting buprenorphine in these patients

(0-7) none - mild withdrawal

COWS

(8) mild - severe withdrawal

Dosing:

None in ED

Waivered provider able to prescribe buprenorphine?

YES

Unobserved buprenorphine induction and referral for ongoing treatment

NO

Referral for ongoing treatment

Dosing:

4-8mg SL*

Observe for 45-60 min
No adverse reaction

If initial dose 4mg SL repeat 4mg SL for total 8mg

Waivered provider able to prescribe buprenorphine?

YES

Prescription
16mg dosing for each day until appointment for ongoing treatment

NO

Consider return to the ED for 2 days of 16mg dosing (72-hour rule)
Referral for ongoing treatment

Notes:

*Clinical Opioid Withdrawal Scale (COWS) ≥ 13 (Moderate-Severe) consider starting with 8 mg buprenorphine or buprenorphine/naloxone SL.

** Patient remains in moderate withdrawal may consider adding additional 4mg and observation for 60 minutes

Warm hand-offs with specific time & date to opioid treatment providers/programs within 24-72 hours whenever possible

All patients should be educated regarding dangers of benzodiazepine and alcohol co-use

Ancillary medication treatments with buprenorphine induction are not needed