

CLIENT HANDBOOK & TREATMENT AGREEMENT



PCHC

**Seaport Community
Health Center**

**Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)
Recovery Program**



Welcome to Seaport Community Health Center's Recovery Program

Seaport Community Health Center (SCHC) Recovery Program's goal is to provide high quality care in a safe and welcoming space. Our providers, nurses and staff do our best to work as a team to be sure you and your family stay as healthy as possible.

SCHC Recovery Program is one of many mental health and substance use services offered by Penobscot Community Health Care (PCHC). You will be encouraged to try other programs if needed to support your ongoing rehabilitation.

Treatment at SCHC Recovery Program is based on shared respect and trust. Your active, honest participation is an important part of this. Our staff will work to make your treatment a success and help you attain a solid recovery from addiction.

Medication Side Effects:

Buprenorphine/Naloxone combination medication (Suboxone) is a powerful opioid that may cause side effects in some people, such as weight gain, constipation, rash, sexual side effects, drowsiness and numbness in the hands and feet. Many side effects go away as you adjust to the medication. Please pay attention to any side effects that you experience, especially when driving or operating machinery, and tell your provider of your symptoms.

SCHC Recovery Program Rules

The following rules aim to support your recovery and keep you and others safe. We want to help you regain the best quality of life while working toward recovery from substance use disorder.

1. Group and Individual Counseling

You will be assigned to a weekly 90-minute counseling group, led by a therapist and a provider. This will be your “home group.” You may also be asked to attend individual counseling to get support with other issues you may be dealing with, such as mental health or substance use problems.

2. Attendance

You must attend group and individual appointments. If you miss any of your first ten group visits, you may be discharged (asked to leave the program). After you attend all of your first ten visits, you may miss one group visit each calendar month with no consequences. If you miss two or more group visits in a month, it will lead to weekly prescriptions, tapering, or other consequences. You may also “bank” your group visits if you are planning a long trip. For each month that you have perfect attendance, you can get a missed visit excused.

3. Group Expectations and Confidentiality

Please arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled group, tell staff that you are here for group, turn off cell phones during group, and avoid leaving before group finishes. It is important for people to feel comfortable and safe in the treatment group. Please respect people’s privacy. Personal information you hear in group should not be discussed outside the group room, or shared with people who were not present in the group.

4. Medication/Prescription Dispensing Procedures

You are assessed by the nurse and provider whenever your medication is refilled or dispensed. If you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, you may not receive your refill that day.

5. Keeping Your Medication Safe

You are required to keep your medication safely stored at all times and out of the reach of minors. Lost or stolen medication **will not be replaced**. We strongly suggest that you buy a lockbox for your medication and to hide this lockbox in a safe place within your home to prevent theft. Keep unused or partially used packets in neat order and do not open any packets unless you are using it that day.

6. How to Take Your Medication

Using buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone) in any way other than prescribed is abuse, and may lead to discharge from the Recovery Program. Buprenorphine/naloxone combination films and tablets are taken under the tongue, where the medication is absorbed into your bloodstream. It is not absorbed if you swallow it. Please ask your pharmacist or provider for more details. It is best to take your medication once a day. This can help decrease cravings caused by repeat dosing.

In active addiction, people sometimes use needles to inject drugs. If you struggle with this habit, please tell your provider and your group in order to get the support that you need. Injecting drugs is dangerous and can lead to fatal infections and diseases.

7. Urine Drug Screening

To assess your progress in recovery, you will have random witnessed drug screens. Please arrive to all visits with a full bladder. When you check in, you will be told if you need to produce a urine sample. If you are unable to produce a sample, we may not be able to fill your prescription.

8. Random Call Backs

You must respond to random callbacks by bringing in your full prescription within 24 hours. A callback occurs when the SCHC Recovery Program sends you a **TEXT MESSAGE** to the primary cell phone number you gave us. The text message will come from a cell phone with the following number: **207-356-6503**. Please add this number to your cell phone contacts. The text message will say, ***“Please present to your doctor’s office in Belfast within 24 hours***

of receiving this message. If unable to present, please call 207-338-6900 to discuss." This message does not provide any personal health information.

IMPORTANT: The primary number you gave to us for random callbacks MUST accept text messaging. We will not call you. You must return to Seaport Community Health Center within 24 hours with **all** your unused medication to successfully complete your callback. It is your responsibility to keep your medicines in proper order and tidy. If you have films, they should be in their original packaging. If you have tablets, bring in the blister packs of your current prescription refill to be checked. You will also be asked to give a witnessed urine drug screen at this time.

IMPORTANT: It is your responsibility to update your phone contact information regularly, including your backup phone numbers, to allow us to reach you. **If you do not return within 24 hours with all medication/wrappers and provide a urine sample, it is considered a failed callback. Failed callbacks are grounds for immediate discharge or taper.**

Avoid failing random callbacks by telling the SCHC Recovery Program ahead of time if you are going to be away for overnight trips or vacations you are planning, or if you will be working far from home.

9. Smoking

We are a non-smoking facility; no smoking on the SCHC property. If you would like help to stop smoking, please talk to your medical provider or counselor. You can also contact The Maine Tobacco Hotline at 1-800-207-1230 or the American Lung Association hotline at 1-800-499-5864 for more information on how to quit smoking.

10. Visitors

Family and significant others are welcome to attend your individual appointments. For the privacy of others, visitors are not allowed to attend group counseling.

11. Children

We do not provide on-site daycare services. If a child is under the age of 12 years old, they cannot be left in the lobby without an adult.



Once children are old enough to understand and repeat what they hear in groups, they should not attend. Children mimic what they hear and can cause a distraction to others.

12. Cell Phones and Pagers

Cell phones and pagers must be turned off or silent when you are in SCHC Recovery Program as they make it difficult for others to focus. For patient privacy, audio or video recording or photographing is not allowed inside the building.

13. Other Medical Providers

We work as a team with your other providers to give you the best chance at recovery. At the start of our program, you will be asked to sign releases for all other medical providers that you work with. If you decline to sign releases, we may not accept you into our program. Active communication with your whole care team is key to providing you the best medical care possible.

14. Prescription Medication outside of SCHC

SCHC Recovery Program will be your only source of controlled substance prescriptions. Controlled substances include medications such as Xanax, Klonopin and other benzodiazepines, as well as stimulants such as Ritalin or Adderall. We need to know about any prescribed medication that you receive from others in order to safely manage your care. Please talk to your prescriber if you have questions.

15. Visits to the Emergency Department and Hospital

If you get medical care at the emergency department, please tell them that you participate in our Recovery Program to be sure you get the best possible care. If you are hospitalized, your hospital doctor must dispense your medication. It is your responsibility to tell them that you are in our Recovery Program and the dose of medication you are taking so that they can continue it. When you leave the emergency department or hospital, you must tell us of any new medications you were prescribed. In order to coordinate care with other providers, we ask you to sign appropriate releases so that we can share your private health information and information, protected under 42 CFR Part 2, with any other health professionals who are caring for you.

The emergency department will not replace your medication. If you run out of your medication outside of normal business hours (Monday through Friday), you will have to wait until the next business day for us to respond to your medication refill request. A scheduled provider visit is required prior to early refills or missed refill appointments. Lost or stolen prescription medications will not be replaced, so keep them safe. Recovery services are closed on weekends and most holidays.

16. Marijuana

Our Recovery Program does not allow ongoing marijuana (cannabis) use as it can make your recovery difficult. We know that some people starting recovery use this substance to cope with stress or challenges in life. We will work with you to address any use of marijuana that is interfering with your recovery. While marijuana is legal under state law, it remains illegal under the federal controlled substances act.

17. Drug Dealing and Deal Making

If we have a good faith reason to believe that you are buying, selling or trading illicit substances or medications, on or off the property, you will be discharged from this program immediately. If you are suspected of these activities, we will work with you to address these reports.

18. Incarceration (Jail)

If you are jailed while in our recovery program, it is unlikely you will receive your medication unless you are pregnant. Most jails do not allow buprenorphine to be given to inmates. Please tell us if you have a scheduled jail term so that we can make arrangements for you to continue your treatment.

19. Prior Authorizations

Your insurance may require a **Prior Authorization (PA)** before paying for any of your medication while in our program. MaineCare requires a PA for increases, any extensions beyond the current two year cap on treatment and while tapering. You are in the best position to track your PAs as your pharmacy will give you the written PA approval when you pick up your prescription. To avoid **ANY DELAY** in getting your medication refill, **PLEASE** track expiration dates on your PAs, and tell us **AT LEAST** one week before your prescription refill date.

20. Leaving Treatment: Completing the Program

Treatment at the SCHC Recovery Program is completed when you have achieved the goals you set for yourself when you entered the program. These might include a more stable lifestyle like getting a job or returning to school, engaging in non-drug oriented activities, setting up a good social support network, living in a drug-free environment, or tapering from your medication without relapse.

21. Leaving Treatment: Discharges Against Medical Advice

Discharges against medical advice (AMA) occur when you choose to stop MAT/Suboxone therapy before your treatment team feels you are ready. You have the right to leave the program whenever you would like to, but people who leave treatment without a plan often have trouble with recovery. If you stop using medication abruptly, you may have a difficult withdrawal. Please let us work with you to develop a solid plan for you to continue your recovery. Leaving recovery against medical advice does not discharge you from your primary medical care at SCHC or PCHC.

22. Leaving Treatment: Administrative Discharge

An administrative discharge happens when we ask you to leave the Recovery Program. You may be asked to leave for any of these reasons:

1. Disruptive conduct or behavior
2. Violence or threats of violence towards staff or other clients
3. Fighting
4. Bringing illicit (illegal) substances into SCHC Recovery Program
5. Bringing weapons (guns, knives) into SCHC Recovery Program
6. Falsifying urine drug screens
7. Dealing, diverting or selling illicit (illegal) substances
8. Ongoing multi-drug use (Suboxone only helps with opioids; we will work with you on other drugs)

9. Theft or suspected theft on SCHC Recovery Program grounds
10. Repeated attendance violations
11. Failing callbacks
12. Breaching client confidentiality

If you are discharged from SCHC Recovery Program, you cannot access our Recovery Program for 3 months after discharge. We will help you find other care if that is appropriate. You are welcome to re-apply after 3 months but are not guaranteed readmission to our program.

If you are discharged against your will for any reason, you have the right to file a grievance under PCHC's Patient Complaint procedure. Discharge from Seaport's Recovery Program usually does not discharge you as a medical patient of the SCHC or PCHC system.

23. Concerning Behavior/Noncompliance with Program Rules

The behaviors listed above may result in a warning letter offering you a final chance to re-engage in our Recovery Program. This chance requires you to fill out a **New Beginnings** packet, and answer questions about your recovery, commitment to treatment and your support system. This packet will be mailed to you. You will have 10 days to complete and return this packet. The MAT team will review your answers and make a decision allowing you to continue treatment or not. If you do not complete and return this packet within 10 days, a 14 day taper/discharge will begin.

Upon approval, you will begin a MAT Probation period which lasts 12 weeks. Any other violation, non-compliance, or concerning behavior during this probation period may start an automatic 14 day taper, cancel all future MAT appointments, and discharge you from the Recovery Program.

24. Abrupt (IMMEDIATE) Termination from Treatment

Engaging in behaviors including, but not limited to, physical fighting, threatening staff or other clients in MAT, and/or damage of clinic property may lead to abrupt termination of **ALL** services and **ban from the SCHC property**. This means **immediate discharge from our program** without any medically supervised withdrawal. It is our policy

to try to find you other treatment providers. **For more information about how SCHC may terminate patient care, please see the “Managing Disruptive Patients & Termination of Patient Care” policy.** *Reminder: engaging in certain behaviors may result in you being BANNED from ANY PCHC property/facility.*

If you sell/divert your medication, and/or falsify a drug screen, **you will be immediately discharged from our program, but will not be banned from the property.** You may still be able to see your primary care provider in our facility but you will not be allowed back into our Recovery Program.

25. Pregnancy

We have a Mother’s Group for moms who are pregnant or who recently gave birth. If you become pregnant and want to join this group, please ask. Some mothers have found the group to be a good source of support during pregnancy in a MAT program.

Upon delivery, your baby will be monitored for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) in the hospital for at least 5 days after birth, and may need treatment. If treatment is needed, your baby may stay in the hospital longer. Your baby may be also referred to our CHAMP (Collaborative Home Alternative Medication Program) Clinic.

The CHAMP Clinic is an outpatient weaning clinic for babies born substance exposed or with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) who need medication treatment. The goal of CHAMP is to help babies safely wean off medications while at home with parents, which improves the parent-infant bond. Medications are changed two times a week, over 6 to 12 weeks, to limit withdrawal symptoms.

The SCHC Recovery Program understands that having a baby while dealing with an active substance use disorder can be hard. We work with a local group of providers, called CHARM (CHildren And Recovering Mothers), who meet monthly to improve care for moms and families in Waldo county dealing with opioid use disorder. Please ask us how CHARM can help you.

26. Hepatitis C and other diseases

Many patients in recovery have hepatitis. Nine out of ten people who have used IV drugs for up to 5 years have hepatitis C and one out of

three patients in our Recovery Program test positive for the disease. People with hepatitis C do not get symptoms for many years, but as they age, about 80% will develop cirrhosis of their liver or liver cancer and most die from these diseases. If you know you have hepatitis C, please let your provider know, or we can do a simple blood test to help you find out. Treatment is costly, but it is easy and can cure you. We can help you find a way to get the treatment you need.

People who use drugs are at high risk of getting other serious diseases too, like syphilis, AIDs, and brain, heart and blood infections. We also screen and treat for these diseases to help you live a healthy long life.

27. Mental Health or Co-occurring Disorders

The SCHC Recovery Program's Behavioral Medicine team offers individual and group therapy designed to help with medication-assisted and therapeutic treatment of substance use and/or mental health disorders. We will encourage you to go to counseling at the start of your treatment and if you struggle at any point during your treatment here. We will offer you a list of providers in the community if we do not have openings for you here.

28. Mandated Reporting

The SCHC Recovery Program and its employees must report for suspected child or elder abuse and neglect, as well as other forms of abuse, such as violence against any person.

29. Grievances

The SCHC Recovery Program tries to give the best care and service for our patients and visitors. If you have a concern about your care or treatment, please tell your provider or our Office Manager so we can work to address it.

We follow PCHC's grievance policy and procedure as explained to each client at the start of treatment. You may also seek help from the State of Maine Office of Advocacy, the Protection and Advocacy Agency, and the Maine Human Rights Commission.

30. Payment

You are expected to remain up-to-date with payment for treatment.



If you have health insurance, please be sure to share your policy information with us. SCHC offers a Sliding Fee Program for those who qualify, based on income and household size. Please ask at the front desk for an application. The Billing Department at PCHC can help you set up a payment plan if you cannot afford your copays or medical bills. Call 207-404-8200 for more information.

31. Family Planning

We can offer family planning information and resources so that you can make thoughtful decisions about the future of your family. Please ask your provider for more information.

32. Welcome!

We wish you success in this program and look forward to helping you in your recovery! Please let us know if you have any questions.

Please Complete the Recovery Program Orientation Form.

Now that you have read our Client Handbook, please be sure to fill out and sign the **Recovery Program Orientation Form** and hand it in to a SCHC Staff Member. These are available from SCHC staff and must be completed prior to starting our Recovery Program.

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