

Requiring Retail Pharmacies to Stock Buprenorphine

Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee

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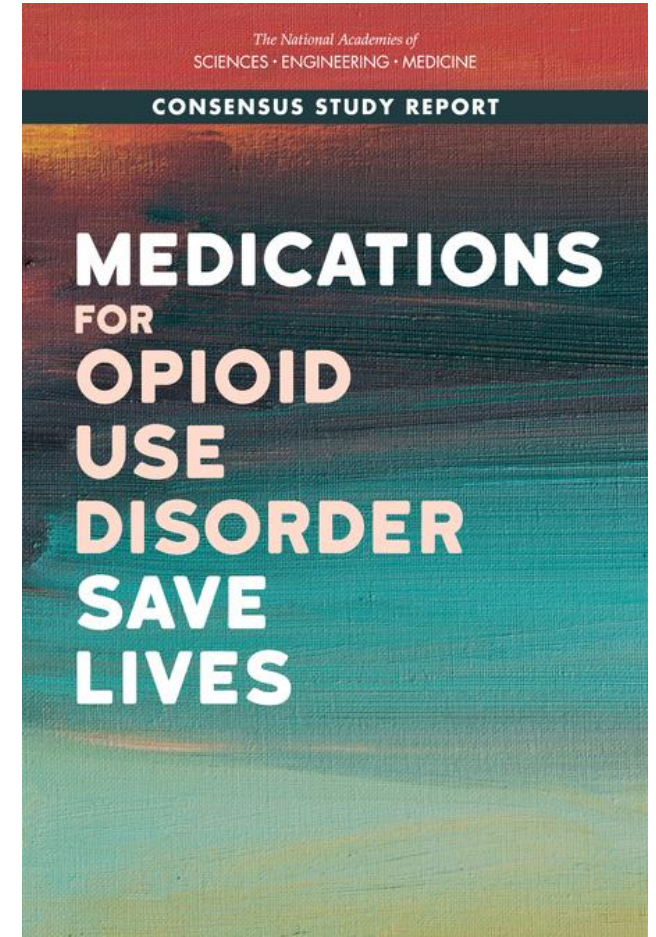


City & County of San Francisco
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Why Buprenorphine

Buprenorphine is an FDA-approved medication for opioid use disorder (OUD) that when taken as prescribed is **safe and effective**:

- **Reduce the risk of dying by up to 50 percent among people with opioid use disorder**
- Lower rates of **other opioid use**
- Improve **social functioning**
- Decrease **injection drug use**
- **Reduce HIV transmission** risk behaviors
- Provide a **higher quality of life** compared to individuals in OUD not in treatment



Buprenorphine is a Key Piece of the City's Overdose Prevention Efforts

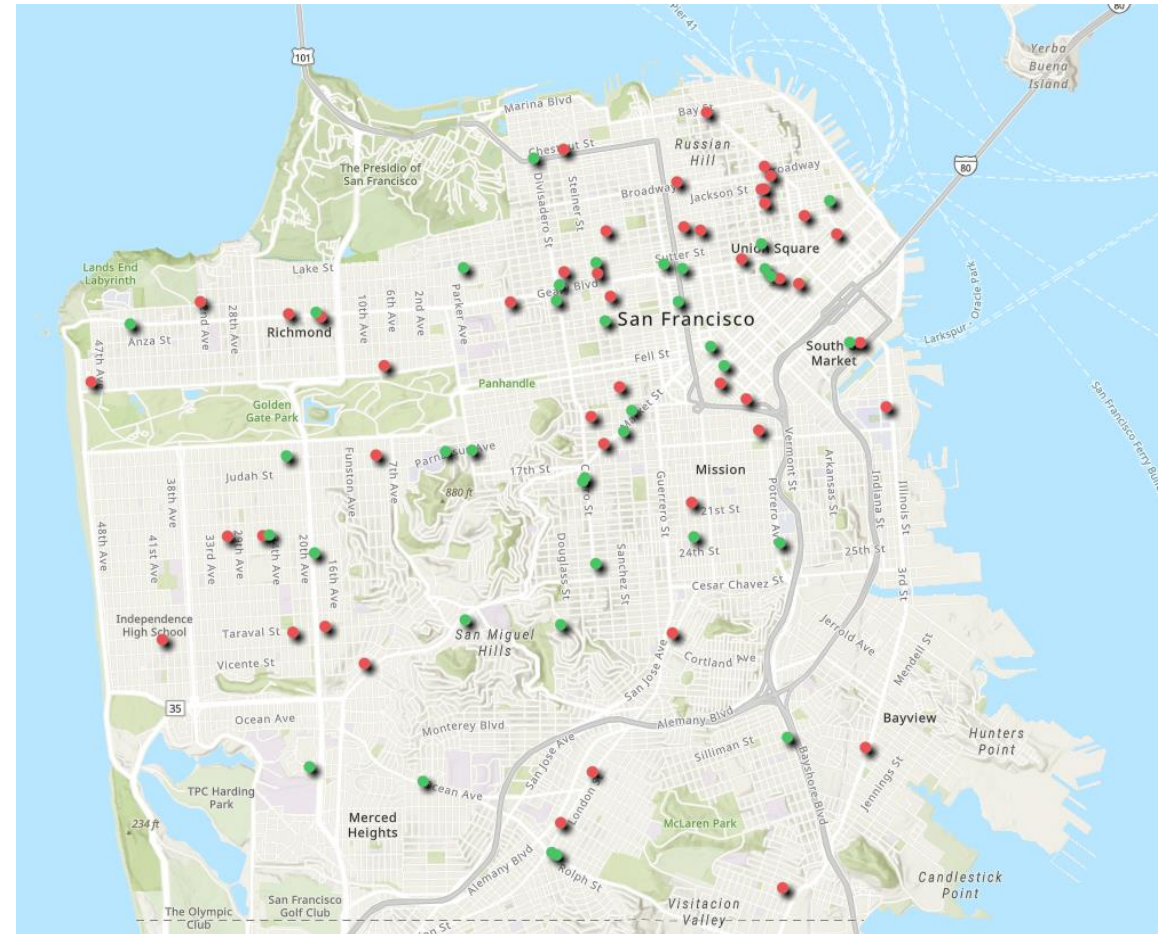
- Support buprenorphine prescribing in San Francisco **Emergency Departments** (2021)
- Increased hours of **Office-based Buprenorphine Induction Clinic (OBIC)** and **BHS Pharmacy** (2023)
- BHS Pharmacy **delivering buprenorphine** to residents in **supportive housing** (2023)
- Supported **California AB663**, which allows **mobile pharmacies** in California to dispense buprenorphine (2023)
- Started **field-administered** buprenorphine, led by SFFD EMS and DEM LEMSA (2023)
- Health care provider education (**academic detailing**) (2024)
- **Nighttime Telehealth Line** to provide immediate access to buprenorphine and referrals to methadone (2024)



Pharmacy Access to Buprenorphine is Limited in SF

Pharmacy access to buprenorphine is a barrier to treatment.

- A 2023 study found that only **47% of pharmacies in CA stocked buprenorphine**.
- In a 2024 survey of **SF retail pharmacies just 44% had buprenorphine in stock** to fill a prescription that day.
- Some pharmacies may only stock buprenorphine for established patients, which is a **barrier to filling new prescriptions**.
- Lack of availability at the pharmacy level can **impede an individual's ability to start or maintain medication treatment**.



Availability of buprenorphine in retail pharmacies

- Yes
- No



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Ordinance – Requiring Retail Pharmacies to Stock Buprenorphine

Builds upon San Francisco's “Naloxone Stocking Ordinance” (Ordinance No. 219-23)

- 1. Requires all retail pharmacies in San Francisco that dispense controlled substances to stock buprenorphine.**
 - Enough buprenorphine to fill all existing prescriptions and at least two additional prescriptions (24 mg/day for seven days each)
- 2. Allows for notice of violation to be issued and administrative penalties for each day of non-compliance consistent with existing City law.**
 - Three-day grace period if a pharmacy recently filled the prescription and is ordering more.



Same Day Access to Buprenorphine

Same day access is critical for patients who are ready to start treatment.

- Individuals with severe OUD do not use opioids to feel high, but they use to not feel sick (**self treat their withdrawal symptoms**)
- **The window to engage people in treatment is often very narrow** because of the urge to use fentanyl to palliate their withdrawal, which can lead to an overdose.
- This makes **immediate and reliable access to medications essential and lifesaving**
 - Cannot expect to have a physician or patient call around to different pharmacies and wait for a few days for a pharmacy to order it
 - Multiple trips to pharmacies may be a barrier to treatment access for patients with physical disabilities and/or transportation limitations



Next Steps

SF pharmacies outreached to during the legislation development process:

- Retail Pharmacies
- Independent Pharmacies

Legislation implementation:

- **Continue to partner with SF pharmacies** on legislation implementation
- DPH to offer **technical assistance** to support compliance and ensure medication availability

We respectfully request Board approval of this ordinance that we believe will save lives.



Thank you