



AANP Summary of the MAT Act and MATE Act March 2023

After years of advocacy by AANP and dozens of others, the new law removes federal barriers to allow all provider types, including NDs, to prescribe life-saving treatments for opioid use disorder. On December 29, President Biden signed the 2023 Omnibus Appropriations bill that included two provisions related to opioid use disorder. We are providing the naturopathic community with an explanation of the new laws and updates as we learn more.

Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act

The first provision is the **Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act**, a bipartisan bill that the AANP supported and advocated for in previous DC FLI lobby days, which eliminates bureaucratic guardrails that limit buprenorphine prescribing.

Why was this bill necessary? Before this bill passed, healthcare professionals had to undergo an extensive registration process to obtain a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) waiver to prescribe buprenorphine, the gold standard for opioid use disorder (OUD). Called the X-waiver, it had onerous requirements that limited patient access, perpetuated stigmas surrounding medication to treat addiction, and excluded NDs even when buprenorphine was in the ND scope of practice to prescribe.

What does the bill do? It eliminates the outdated X-waiver required for healthcare providers to dispense buprenorphine for opioid use disorder. It will remove barriers, reduce stigma, and increase access to life-saving treatment that prevents overdoses and supports recovery.

Who is allowed to prescribe buprenorphine for opioid use disorder? All practitioners who have a current DEA registration (license) that includes Schedule III authority, who also have the ability to prescribe controlled substances (such as buprenorphine), may now prescribe buprenorphine IF PERMITTED BY STATE LAW (see next bullet).

Can NDs in licensed states that have the ability to prescribe controlled substances prescribe buprenorphine now? It depends. Effective immediately, there is no federal barrier to your ability to prescribe buprenorphine if it is in your state's scope of practice. However, some licensed states with the ability to prescribe controlled substances have limitations or additional requirements that do not allow NDs to prescribe buprenorphine for OUD. Please do not start prescribing until you verify if your state has any state-specific requirements!

- Previously, **Oregon** NDs could not prescribe buprenorphine for OUD, per the Oregon Board of Naturopathic Medicine (OBNM) administrative rule. However, the OBNM has since changed its rules to **allow** NDs to prescribe buprenorphine for OUD.

Medication Access and Training Expansion (MATE) Act

The second provision is the **Medication Access and Training Expansion (MATE) Act**, which established baseline education and training for providers managing patients with substance use disorders.

What does the bill do? Starting in June 2023, the MATE Act requires health care providers, **as a condition of receiving or renewing their Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) license to prescribe controlled substances**, to receive one-time, eight hours of addiction education and training. The training outlined in the bill must be provided by one or more accredited organizations or an accredited health professional school or residency program.

Do NDs already get the amount of required training during naturopathic medical school? We know that accredited naturopathic schools in the U.S. provide students with varying levels of training related to substance use disorder. However, we are unsure if accredited naturopathic medical schools are considered “accredited health professional schools” as outlined in the new law and whether our naturopathic curriculum fulfills the new training requirements. The AANP is working with the appropriate agencies to get more clarification about this and will inform the community when we know more.

- In the meantime, *if you know of other accredited organizations or programs that offer an 8-hour addiction education and training curriculum that are open to NDs, please notify us so we can compile and disseminate a list of options.*

Summary

What we know *for sure*

- The outdated x-waiver required to prescribe buprenorphine has been eliminated, effective immediately. Check with your state regulatory body for any state restrictions. If there are none and this is in your prescriptive authority, you can immediately begin prescribing buprenorphine for opioid use disorder.
- Starting in June 2023, ALL health care practitioners who apply for or seek to renew their DEA license to prescribe controlled substances will need to complete a one-time, 8-hour training provided by an authorized entity.
- The new training requirements (that will begin in June) do not impact the changes related to the elimination of the X-waiver (that is in effect now). This means that practitioners who meet all of the requirements (have a current DEA registration that includes Schedule III authority and are permitted by applicable state laws) may prescribe buprenorphine now.

What we *aren't sure of* and are getting clarification on

- Whether all licensed states with NDs that have the ability to prescribe Schedule II-V controlled substances can start prescribing buprenorphine for opioid use disorder. Some

states have limitations that prevent licensed NDs from doing so. We are getting clarification from each state that has the ability to prescribe controlled substances in their scope and will provide additional guidance when we learn more.

- If accredited naturopathic medical schools are considered “accredited health professional schools” as outlined in the MATE Act or whether the AANP is an “approved organization” to provide our doctors with addiction education and training that is compliant with the new training requirements.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) are actively working to provide further guidance. We are working with our lobbyist to gather specific information related to licensed naturopathic doctors and will share our findings with the naturopathic community.

As the AANP continues to understand the impact of these new laws on our community, we want to express our appreciation for the tireless work of the organizations that pushed for this change, as well as our ND advocates who attended AANP’s lobby days and continued to advocate for the last few years. We applaud this important systematic reform of how our country approaches substance use disorder.