

Most Patients Receiving Buprenorphine in EDs for Opioid Use Disorder Don't Fill Subsequent Prescriptions for It



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THE ISSUE

Individuals with opioid use disorder may receive buprenorphine during an ED visit. However, successful treatment requires patients to obtain ongoing care from community providers.



STUDY FOCUS

The OPTIC team used pharmacy claims data capturing about 92% of prescriptions filled at U.S. retail pharmacies to identify buprenorphine prescriptions written by emergency physicians that were filled between February 1, 2019 and November 30, 2020.



KEY FINDINGS

The majority of patients who filled buprenorphine prescriptions written by emergency physicians did not subsequently fill prescriptions written by other clinicians. The rates of subsequent prescriptions were lower after the declaration of the COVID-19 public health emergency.



IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

Emergency departments provide an opportunity to start medication to treat opioid use disorder and to link patients to some form of ongoing treatment. This study highlights the need to improve continuity of treatment for patients with opioid use disorder started on medication as they transition from emergency settings to community treatment providers.

Stein, B. D., Saloner, B., Kerber, R., Sorbero, M., & Gordon, A. J. (2022). Subsequent Buprenorphine Treatment Following Emergency Physician Buprenorphine Prescription Fills: A National Assessment 2019 to 2020. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, 79(5), 441-450.

