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PRESS RELEASE

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Second edition of Medications for Addiction Treatment (MAT) Guide released with updated guidance for treating opioid use disorder

May 17, 2021 – The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) has released the second edition of the MAT Guide for Alaska health care providers on best practices for treating opioid use disorder (OUD).

This new edition of the *Medications for Addiction Treatment Guide*, formerly known as the Medication Assisted Treatment Guide, includes:

- Updated guidance from the American Society of Addiction Medicine's 2020 guidelines on effective ways to use medications to treat an opioid addiction
- An emphasis on using a non-stigmatizing approach
- Medications that can be used for alcohol use disorder
- Identifying Alaska-centered resources for providers, patients and families

Alaska's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Anne Zink said, "Alaska is unfortunately mirroring the national trend of increasing overdose deaths in 2020, so it's imperative that we empower health care providers with the information they need to offer effective treatment for Alaskans struggling with opioid addiction."

"This is a timely update to the MAT Guide as we know anxiety and stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the preexisting opioid epidemic," said Dr. Sarah Spencer, an Alaska physician with experience in addiction medicine and one of the authors of the new edition. "The COVID-19 pandemic has also made it more challenging for health care providers to provide treatment, but they are rising to these challenges by adapting their practices and using options such as telemedicine more frequently."

The MAT Guide offers updated practical guidance on how to implement or expand MAT treatment, clinical considerations, addiction treatment medications, and other relevant topics, including practicing MAT during a public health emergency. The guide is available to read and download on the Division of Behavioral Health's website at

dhss.alaska.gov/dbh/Pages/Initiatives/EvidenceBasedPractices/MAT.aspx.

For more information visit:

- [DHSS Epidemiology Bulletin](#): Indicators of Self-Harm and Unintentional Drug Overdose during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Alaska, December 2020
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Health Advisory](#): Increase in Fatal Drug Overdoses Across the United States Driven by Synthetic Opioids Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic, December 2020
- [SAMHSA: Medication-Assisted Treatment \(MAT\)](#)
- [SAMHSA: Find Treatment Locator](#)

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