Diagnosis of Moderate to Severe Opioid Use Disorder

Assess for opioid type and last use
Patients taking methadone may have withdrawal reactions to buprenorphine up to 72 hours after last use
Consider consultation before starting buprenorphine in these patients

COWS
(>8) mild - severe withdrawal

Dosing:
4-8mg SL*

Waivered provider able to prescribe buprenorphine?

YES

Unobserved buprenorphine induction and referral for ongoing treatment

NO

Referral for ongoing treatment

NO

Observe for 45-60 min
No adverse reaction

If initial dose 4mg SL repeat 4mg SL for total 8mg

Waivered provider able to prescribe buprenorphine?

YES

Prescription 16mg dosing for each day until appointment for ongoing treatment

NO

Consider return to the ED for 2 days of 16mg dosing (72-hour rule)***

Referral for ongoing treatment

Notes:
*Clinical Opioid Withdrawal Scale (COWS) ≥ 13 (Moderate-Severe) consider starting with 8 mg buprenorphine or buprenorphine/naloxone SL
** Patient remains in moderate withdrawal may consider adding additional 4mg and observation for 60 minutes
***Consider high dosing in consultation with an Addiction Medicine Specialist
Warm hand-offs with specific time & date to opioid treatment providers/programs within 24-72 hours whenever possible
All patients should be educated regarding dangers of benzodiazepine and alcohol co-use
Ancillary medication treatments with buprenorphine induction are not needed