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**Subject:** Additional Help Coming to Reduce Waitlists for Opiate Treatment

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Additional Help Coming to Reduce Waitlists for Opiate Treatment**

**Montpelier** – After prodding from many working to combat the opiate epidemic, including Gov. Peter Shumlin, the federal government has announced that it will allow nurse practitioners and physicians assistants to begin prescribing medications that help break opiate addiction. Previously, while nurse practitioners and physicians assistants could prescribe highly-addictive opioid painkillers, only physicians could prescribe medications to treat addiction, like buprenorphine.

“This is really great news for those addicted to opiates who are ready to get help and those of us fighting to put an end to the addiction crisis in America,” Gov. Shumlin said. “By allowing more medical professionals to prescribe these treatments, we will hopefully further reduce waitlists and get more Vermonters and Americans into recovery. It was absolutely crazy to many of us that we were allowing a wide variety of medical professionals to prescribe FDA-approved painkillers that we know can lead to a lifetime of addiction, while restricting who could help once addiction took hold. With the intensity and severity of the opiate crisis, we need all hands on deck. This is a big step in the right direction.”

[In December of 2015](#), Gov. Shumlin led a group of governors from around the country calling for this change. [In January](#), the Governor went in front of Congress to plead for it.

According to [the announcement](#) from the Department of Health and Human Services, “NPs and PAs who complete the required training and seek to prescribe buprenorphine for up to 30 patients will be able to apply to do so beginning in early 2017....Once NPs and PAs receive their waiver they can begin prescribing buprenorphine immediately.”

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