

## MEDICATION-ASSISTED TREATMENT (MAT) READINESS AND IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

**Tool Purpose:** The following series of questions can assist in determining organizational readiness to implement MAT, though there may be others depending on the design and make up of your organization. The questions are organized into five key sections:

- *Organizational readiness*
- *Economic and regulatory readiness*
- *Workforce readiness*
- *Community readiness*
- *Patient and caregiver readiness*

Each section includes a series of questions regarding areas to be considered before implementing a successful and sustainable MAT program. The sections and questions below reflect consensus from interviews and discussions with experts (see acknowledgements section) as well as representative of organizations that have successfully implemented MAT.

**Tool Completion:** This tool should be completed by any agency considering implementing MAT.

**Tool Directions:** Each section includes a series of questions regarding key areas for implementing a successful and sustainable MAT program. Review each question in consideration of the following scale:

- *Not Ready* = You do not have this information and you do not have a plan to obtain it.
- *In Progress* = You do not have this information, but you have a plan to obtain it.
- *Ready* = You have the information needed and/or a plan to address the questions cited.

For each set of questions place a checkmark in the category that best describes your current status. Count the totals from each category. Questions and categories with high numbers of responses of “not ready” or “in progress” should be prioritized as items to be addressed before moving forward with MAT implementation.

### Organizational Readiness

Critical to the successful implementation of any new initiative is the organization’s readiness to take on such an initiative. When implementing MAT services, organizations must have significant administrative support and clear organizational processes in place.

Question/Area of Consideration	Not Ready	In progress	Ready
Does your organizational leadership, including your board of directors, support the use of MAT? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could they benefit from gaining further information about MAT?</li> <li>• Are there opportunities for sharing this information with your organization’s board?</li> </ul>			
Do you have data that demonstrate the potential benefits of offering MAT to the people you serve, including information on comorbid conditions and medication use?			
Have you decided what MAT services you will offer? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opioid use disorder</li> <li>• Alcohol use disorder</li> <li>• Smoking cessation</li> </ul>			
Have you decided who you will offer services to? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All patients</li> <li>• Those with comorbid mental health disorders (see example below)</li> <li>• Those with comorbid chronic medical conditions</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>			
Do you have a plan to provide or connect patients to appropriate counseling and other behavioral health services?			
How will you implement the most current guidelines for the use of MAT?			
Do you have a quality assurance protocol for supporting and maintaining these new practices?			
Does your infrastructure support requirements (e.g., appropriate clinical space, storage) for offering MAT services?			
Do you know how 42CFR or state-based confidentiality laws would apply to your organization and patient populations?			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you have the proper consent forms in place?</li> <li>Do you have the proper Memorandums of understanding (MOU), Qualified Service Organization Agreement (QSOA) or other agreements in place to appropriately share information related MAT?</li> </ul>			
Total (count)			

### Financial and Regulatory Readiness

Coverage and reimbursement for MAT varies from state to state for both the public sector and private insurance marketplace. Many states and commercial health plans require some form of preauthorization and some require that providers begin treatment with certain medications (step therapy). As coverage and policies may change over time, it is important to stay informed about your state's policies and private insurance options to find out where reimbursement is possible.

Question/Area of Consideration	Not Ready	In progress	Ready
What do Medicaid and commercial insurers require for the use of MAT in your state? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there limitations on who can prescribe MAT, the length of time patients can use MAT, and/or the type(s) of formulations patients may receive?</li> </ul>			
Does your state's Medicaid plan cover the MAT formulations that you would like to start offering (e.g., injectable naltrexone, sublingual buprenorphine)?			
Does your state view the use of MAT as an evidence-based practice? (Some states require that clinicians follow evidence-based practices to be reimbursed under Medicaid and private insurance.)			
Are you aware of the typical out-of-pocket cost for the medications, and are your patients able to afford these costs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If not, are you aware of ways you may be able to offset these costs for patients who need assistance?</li> </ul>			
Are clinicians eligible to receive Medicaid or commercial insurance reimbursement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are they on preferred provider lists for commercial insurers and Medicaid managed care programs?</li> </ul>			

Will clinicians be reimbursed for clinical services required for MAT, such as physical examinations and laboratory tests?			
Total (count)			

### Workforce Readiness

Having a knowledgeable and well-trained workforce is essential to implementation of MAT. Ensuring that staff have the resources, education, and clinical supports they need enables them to work more effectively and efficiently.

Question/Area of Consideration	Not Ready	In progress	Ready
How do current employees view MAT? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How supportive are they?</li> <li>• Do they need education to understand the benefits of adding medication to current substance use disorder treatments?</li> </ul>			
Are there attitudinal barriers to the use of MAT in your state and community? If so, what are they and do you have a plan to address those barriers?			
Does your agency have an appropriately trained team (physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, nurse, care coordinator, behavioral health specialist, peer support specialists) to administer medication and the associated behavioral health services?			
How will you access prescribers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the prescribers be internal or contracted?</li> <li>• Will they be full- or part-time?</li> <li>• How will you train them?</li> <li>• How will you retain them in the practice?</li> </ul>			
What are your state's regulations required to implement a MAT program, particularly scope of practice and necessary certifications? (For instance, some states require that physicians conduct the clinical assessment rather than nurses or social workers.)			
Do you know how you will provide on-going training and supervision to staff?			
Total (count)			

### Community Readiness

In addition to robust internal policies and procedures, sustaining MAT over the long term requires access to other community resources to enhance the services your organization provides.

Question/Area of Consideration	Not Ready	In progress	Ready
How will you work with consumer groups and advocates to increase demand for and knowledge of MAT in the broader community?			
Do you know and have relationships with other treatment programs in your region and state currently providing MAT? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well do clinicians in your area accept the “medical model” of treatment for substance use disorders?</li> </ul>			
Do you have relationships with other organizations that can provide additional treatment supports and resources? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you able to contract with any of these other providers as a referral resource?</li> </ul>			
Is your organization a member of any group or association that supports the use of medications (e.g., primary care associations)?			
Are state and local legislators aware of the evidence behind MAT? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If not, do you have a plan to educate them?</li> <li>How will you work with legislators to advocate for and improve the financing and regulatory environment for implementation of MAT?</li> </ul>			
Total (count)			

### Patient/Caregiver Readiness

Education and engagement of patients and families on the use of MAT is key to sustaining treatment services beyond the organization’s walls. Providing patients and families with proper information helps involve them in the self-management of their treatment.

Question/Area of Consideration	Not Ready	In progress	Ready
Are there patient or caregiver barriers to the use of MAT? (These may include attitudinal barriers, out-of-pocket costs, barriers regarding transportation to/from appointments, and difficulties with the side effects of taking the medication.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who will provide leadership to develop and implement plans to overcome these barriers?</li> </ul>			
How do you assess patient and caregiver knowledge or understanding of substance use disorders and MAT?			
How will you educate patients and caregivers about the risks and benefits of MAT and its place within the treatment continuum?			
How do you assess a patient’s support network? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you aware of the options for mutual support groups in your community that are supportive of the use of MAT?</li> </ul>			
Is there a mechanism for you to receive feedback from patients and caregivers regarding the quality of your services?			
Total (count)			

### Next Steps: Move from Readiness to Action

Take a look at where your responses fall in each section. Your responses should give you a clear picture of where you have knowledge gaps and point out potential barriers to success. Depending on what gaps you’ve identified, your next step may be to share further information with staff or your agency leadership or form a plan to educate community members and leaders.

#### Expert Panel

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**Robert Cabaj, MD**- *Chair of Psychiatry, Medical Director, San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services*

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