There are many pathways to addiction recovery. One pathway can be Medication-Assisted Recovery—the use of medication, as prescribed and overseen by a physician knowledgeable about addiction care, to support recovery from a substance use disorder. The purpose of NCADD's Consumer Guide to Medication-Assisted Recovery is to educate the "consumer"—anyone considering medications to aid their own addiction recovery or that of a family member, and anyone who has reservations or questions about this option. A well-informed person can make wise decisions about their recovery.

We know that people who suffer from the disease of addiction generally need each other to recover. Ironically and tragically, the one place individuals in Medication-Assisted Recovery might expect to find support, tolerance and empathy—within the addiction treatment and the recovery communities—is where they are all too often viewed as not being abstinent, criticized, and denied their legitimate status as a person in recovery. This Guide is designed to dispel some of the myths, misconceptions, misinformation and the stigma that surround this often lifesaving pathway to recovery.

Some wrongly view the use of a medication to abstain from a drug as "just substituting one drug for another." However, decades of research and treatment experience show that it is not. To understand why and how these medications work, please keep reading.

NCADD's Consumer Guide to Medication-Assisted Recovery offers general information about leading medications used in the treatment of addiction. We do not support or reject any particular medication. You must consult with your doctor or other treatment provider to find out if a particular medication could help you.

NCADD is grateful to our Affiliate, The Council of Southeast Pennsylvania (formerly the Bucks

County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence) in Greater Philadelphia, PA and its program, PRO-ACT, for creating the original Consumer's Guide, which was edited and updated by the Medical/Scientific Committee of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc.

To access the NCADD Consumer Guide to Medication-Assisted Recovery (in its entirety), please click here.

SAMHSA Advisory: An Introduction to Extended-Release Injectable Naltrexone for the Treatment of People With Opioid Dependence

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved extended-release injectable naltrexone (Vivitrol) in October 2010 to treat people with opioid dependence. This medication provides patients with opioid dependence the opportunity to take effective medication monthly, as opposed to the daily dosing required by other opioid dependence medications (i.e., methadone, buprenorphine, oral naltrexone). Extended-release injectable naltrexone was approved by FDA in 2006 to treat people with alcohol dependence.

Treatment of opioid dependence remains a national priority. According to the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, approximately 359,000 individuals reported either dependence on or abuse of heroin, and 1.92 million individuals reported either dependence on or abuse of prescribed painkillers.1 The Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) reports that between 1998 and 2008 the percentage of individuals ages 12 and older who entered substance abuse treatment because of pain reliever abuse increased more than fourfold—from 2.2 percent to 9.8 percent.

This Advisory provides an introduction to extended-release injectable naltrexone. It includes succinct information about extended-release injectable naltrexone, how it compares with other medication-assisted treatment (MAT) options, and clinical strategies that may be used to select, initiate, and administer treatment.

To download the SAMHSA Advisory, click here.