



Medication Assisted Recovery for OUD and AUD

The Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (IDHS/SUPR) through the Illinois Helpline now offers medication on demand to IL residents seeking treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD) and alcohol use disorder (AUD).

Medication-assisted recovery (MAR) involves the use of FDA-approved medications for the treatment of OUD and AUD. Now an individual can speak directly with a provider over the phone, immediately receive a prescription or expedited, in-person appointment, and get transportation assistance to the pharmacy or clinic – all initiated through one phone call.

Callers can access MAR NOW 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Care managers help callers determine their best treatment options and connect them to a provider for an immediate telephone appointment and medication prescription. Care coordinators can also facilitate a same- or next-day, in-person appointment. All callers are connected to ongoing treatment with a community provider that best meets their needs.

What are the benefits of Medication Assisted Recovery (MAR)?

- MAR decreases opioid and alcohol use.
- MAR reduces withdrawal symptoms for opioid use.
- MAR reduces cravings.
- MAR retains patients in treatment longer than those receiving counseling without medication.
- MAR reduces the risk of opioid overdose and mortality: patients receiving medication as part of their treatment have a 40–80% lowered risk of fatal overdose compared to those not receiving medication as part of their treatment.

How does the new MAR NOW service work?

- Callers to the Helpline (833-2FINDHELP/833-234-6343) can ask for MAR NOW, or any form of immediate treatment for opioid or alcohol use disorder and will be connected to a MAR NOW care coordinator for immediate access to medication and counseling services for OUD/AUD, including telephonic prescription and home induction medications.
- MAR NOW Care Managers can help callers with transportation to and from treatment and ensure that callers are connected to long-term care.
- MAR NOW operates 24 hours a day.

Who can access MAR NOW?

- Anyone experiencing OUD or AUD can access MAR NOW, regardless of ability to pay, insurance status, or documentation.
- MAR NOW is also available to patients in a hospital setting who are diagnosed with OUD/AUD.

What treatment is available for opioid use disorder (OUD)?

- **Buprenorphine:** reduces withdrawal and cravings
- **Methadone:** reduces withdrawal and cravings
- **Long-Acting Naltrexone:** reduces cravings
- **Assistance for Hospitals and Clinics:** MAR NOW staff can assist hospital staff with in-hospital buprenorphine induction or provide other arrangements when buprenorphine induction is not indicated or preferred.
- **Withdrawal Symptom Management:** medications to help with nausea, anxiety, insomnia, diarrhea, muscle aches, and other opioid withdrawal symptoms can be prescribed in conjunction with MAR.

What treatment is available for alcohol use disorder (AUD)?

- Currently, MAR NOW for AUD is available for patients seeking treatment in an outpatient setting.
- Treatment for AUD is not one size fits all, but your provider will work with you to find what best fits your needs.
- Current maintenance medications approved for outpatient use include:
 - **Naltrexone** can help people reduce heavy drinking.
 - **Acamprosate** makes it easier to maintain abstinence.
- **Disulfiram** blocks the breakdown (metabolism) of alcohol by the body, causing unpleasant symptoms such as nausea and flushing of the skin. Those unpleasant effects can help some people avoid drinking while taking Disulfiram.
- Outpatient withdrawal management for AUD is also available for patients who qualify based on medical severity and safety with a medication called gabapentin.

MAR NOW staff also offers referral information to outpatient care that supports recovery efforts post-discharge including continuation of medication assisted recovery, residential treatment, recovery housing, and additional services.

MAR NOW is a service of the Illinois Helpline (funded by IDHS/SUPR), the only statewide, public resource for finding substance use treatment, recovery, and harm reduction services in Illinois. Trained Helpline Specialists answer questions, provide support, and guide callers to the service options best for them.

Helpline services are free, confidential, and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

