

April 3, 2017



Michael Heifetz
Director of the Division of Medicaid Services
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
1 West Wilson Street
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Director Heifetz:

Sheriffs in Wisconsin are on the front lines of the opioid crisis in Wisconsin. This plague impacts our daily work in our capacity as first responders, when leading the efforts on drug take-back days, and while housing those arrested for these drug offenses. We greatly appreciate the efforts policymakers have taken to meet the challenges presented by this epidemic and celebrate the collaboration of all parties involved.

It is with these collaborative efforts in mind that we reach out to you today. In our secure facilities, we must deal with contraband. Buprenorphine film strips, or Suboxone, have quickly become a leading contraband item as they are thin and malleable strips that can easily be passed from individual to individual. Their pliable formulation allows the strips to be cut and placed on the back of postage stamps, under the seal of an envelope, and in the binding of a Bible. We have seen cases of Suboxone film strips coming in on artwork from a family member.

Wisconsin's Medicaid program offers one preferred drug on its formulary, the Suboxone film strip. Because of the demographics of our detained populations we believe that Medicaid eligible families are partially responsible for the increase of film contraband in Wisconsin jails. As such, we ask for your assistance and leadership in alleviating this problem.

We believe Medicaid should move towards medications that would present less challenges to secured facilities in Wisconsin. We are aware of other buprenorphine products that are not in this film formulation and would encourage you to consider those alternatives for the preferred drug list.

Please consider the impact this coverage decision has on law enforcement and the difficulties this drug is presenting as contraband. We will never be able to eliminate contraband, no matter the form, but the film strip adds a unique level of pressure on our facilities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheriff Nancy Hove".

Sheriff Nancy Hove
Pierce County Sheriff's Office
President
Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheriff Kim Gaffney".

Sheriff Kim Gaffney
Marquette County Sheriff's Office
President
Badger State Sheriffs' Association