



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
RSA UNION BUILDING
100 NORTH UNION STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 301410
MONTGOMERY, AL 36130-1410
WWW.MH.ALABAMA.GOV



Kay Ivey
Governor

Kimberly G. Boswell
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

26-MHSU-03

TO: Opioid Treatment Programs

FROM: Nicole Walden, 
Associate Commissioner for Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment Services

DATE: October 17, 2025

RE: Holiday and Blanket Exceptions for Take-Home Requests

Please note that there have been changes to the holiday and blanket exceptions due to updates in the federal regulations under 42 CFR Part 8. Blanket exceptions are no longer required, and you do not need to submit them to ADMH or SAMHSA. Your doctor now has greater flexibility to approve take-home medications. SAMHSA has provided some helpful tips for submitting requests, which I have included below.

During this lapse in funding, SAMHSA is limited to conducting essential functions, only, with limited staff. When requests are unclear or have errors, the only option available at the federal level is to deny the request and ask that it be revised. This delays the final approval. We are also receiving requests for the winter holiday season. There is not a way to separate these from immediate patient care needs; therefore, these, too, delay approvals.

It would be most helpful if OTPs would:

- Hold requests for December and January holidays at least until mid-November and hold any general requests for 2026 until December.
- Review the requests prior to submitting to be sure the information is correct (especially dates of admission and request dates). Please note requests cannot be approved retroactively.
- Be clear about the actual request so that it could be understood by someone who does not know the patient, the area or state rules.
- Where state regulations are consistent with Part 8, please do not submit exceptions for things that are not required (ex: split dosing, change of phase of treatment, take homes for people clearly stable in treatment for several years).
- Remember these are legal documents; requests that indicate ongoing substance use should include documentation of the prescriber's justification.
- Remember that not all patients can safely manage multiple take-homes; programs should have a safe plan or arrangements for patients. Examples of safe plans are 1) alternate site or guest dosing, 2) engaging a peer recovery support, 3) giving custody of the medication to a person deemed eligible by the OTP.

If your agency has questions or needs further clarification, please notify Lashanda Craig by email at lashanda.craig@mh.alabama.gov or by phone at (334) 353-7411.

Thank you for your continued efforts.

