The Department is charged with protecting children from the damaging effects of impaired caregiving. Accurately assessing and/or investigating families for substance abuse is increasingly complex, and this is especially true in situations where the potentially abused substances are prescribed or able to be prescribed. Buprenorphine is a commonly prescribed drug that comes in many forms and can be taken legally or abused illegally. Many case managers have begun requesting pharmacy and prescribing provider records to aid in accurate assessment and evidence collection, and this has been a great tool in casework. However, these records can be difficult to decipher. Understanding the basic information in this Safety Notice may help in your work to keep children safe and families healthy.

**Terms to Know in Reviewing Buprenorphine Prescriptions/Record:**

- **Buccal** – placed between the teeth and the cheek
- **Transdermal** – applied to the skin
- **Subcutaneous** – placed under the skin
- **Sublingual** – placed under the tongue

**Route(s):**

Buprenorphine is available as:

- **Buccal film**: Belbuca™
- **Transdermal patch (weekly)**: Butrans™
- **Subcutaneous implant**: Probuphine Implant Kit™
- **Sublingual tablet**: generic buprenorphine

Note: **Subutex™** is a trade name for buprenorphine sublingual tablets. When people use the name “subutex” they are referring to buprenorphine. This is the preferred prescription for pregnant women, because it does not contain naloxone.

**Buprenorphine-Naloxone is available as:**

- Buccal film: Bunavail™
- Sublingual film: **Suboxone™**
- Sublingual tablet: Zubsolv™,
- Sublingual tablet: generic buprenorphine-naloxone

**Dosing:**

- Buprenorphine (commonly called “Subutex”) is prescribed in a 2mg or 8mg dose.
- Buprenorphine with naloxone is prescribed in “2mg buprenorphine combined with naloxone 0.5mg” or “8mgs buprenorphine combined with naloxone 2mg.”

**Helpful Note:**

Under the direction of a physician, buprenorphine is used to treat opioid addiction. The purpose of naloxone being combined with buprenorphine (i.e. **Suboxone**) is to deter intravenous abuse. Naloxone has very low effect when taken sublingually; if the medication is abused intravenously, then naloxone will potentially cause withdrawal symptoms. Naloxone is also used by medical professionals to treat known or suspected opioid overdose.