

July 26, 2007

METHADONE TREATMENT CENTRE

Methadone Treatment:

For people addicted to opioids, the long-term solution for treatment is methadone. Opioids (also known as opiates or narcotics) are drugs that are derived from the opium poppy plant. They relieve pain and provide a short-term feeling of euphoria. Drugs in this category include heroin, codeine and morphine.

Methadone is a synthetic opioid, meaning it is created chemically in a lab. Methadone prevents the symptoms of opioid withdrawal and reduces opioid cravings for 24 to 36 hours at a time and stops the euphoric effects of short-term opioids such as heroin and morphine. This allows the patient to function daily without the extreme highs and lows associated with heroin and other opioids.

Methadone is administered once a day and diluted in a liquid form. Treatment usually requires continuous treatment and for some patients, can take several years.

A person taking a daily dose of methadone can continue to study, work and take care of family. However, the patient might experience side effects such as sweating, constipation and weight gain.

Methadone Investments

The government announced a \$2 million investment in methadone maintenance treatment initiatives in Ontario. It is estimated that untreated opioid addictions exceeds \$1 billion dollars in social, economic and health-care costs. This includes loss of productivity, premature mortality and legal costs. Alternatively, methadone is an inexpensive treatment that costs less than \$20 a day.

A task force on methadone treatment was created by the McGuinty government in April of 2006. The \$2 million investment will support methadone maintenance treatment initiatives and bring the province's annual total funding for methadone treatment to \$4.3 million.

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