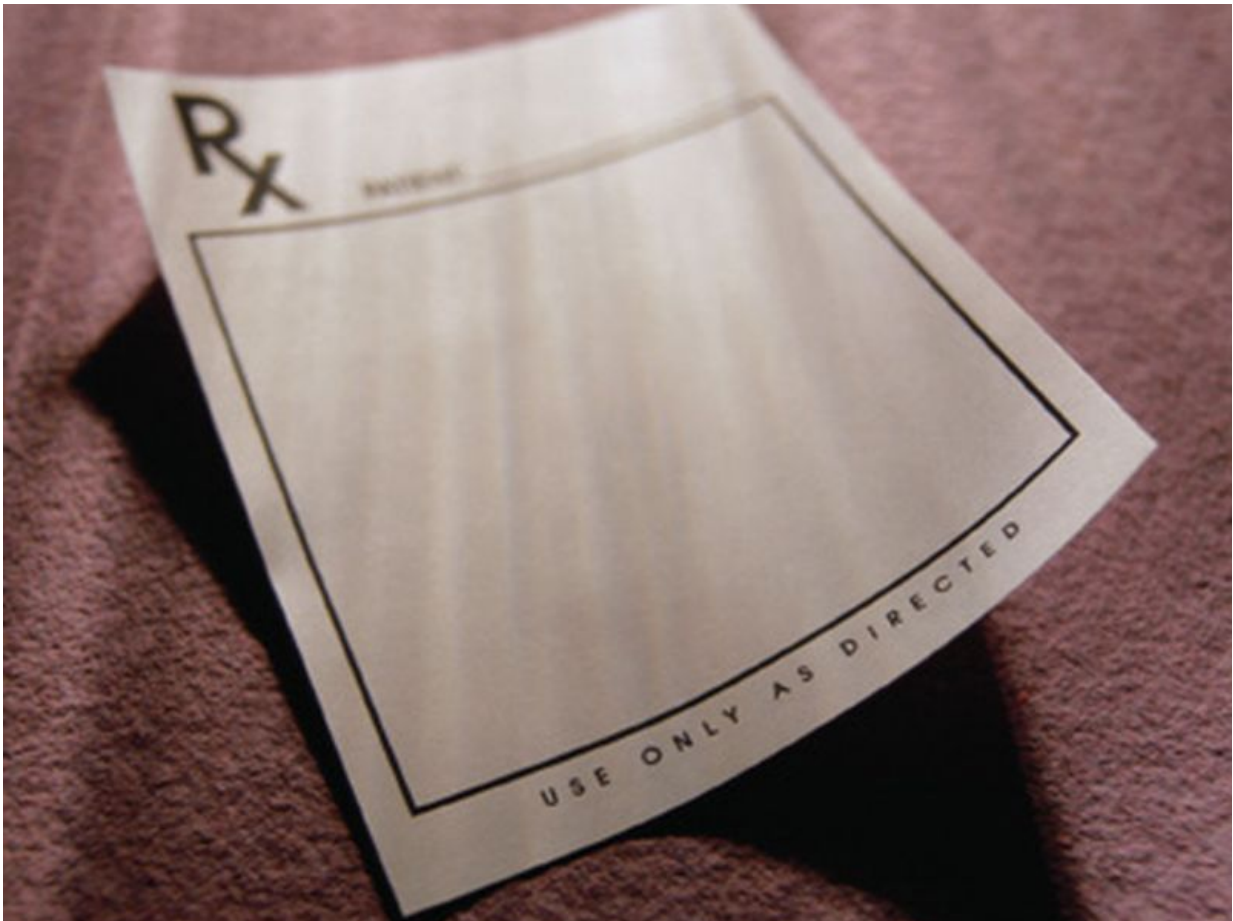


# Physicians treating few patients with buprenorphine

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(HealthDay)—For buprenorphine prescribers, the monthly patient

census is 13 patients, according to a research letter published in the Sept. 20 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Bradley D. Stein, M.D., Ph.D., from the RAND Corporation in Pittsburgh, and colleagues analyzed data from the Symphony Health Solutions' Integrated Dataverse for seven states with the most buprenorphine-waivered physicians, who are restricted in the number of patients with opioid disorders that they can treat concurrently. The number of patient episodes (starting with the first observed buprenorphine claim) for each provider were summed to calculate monthly patient census.

The researchers identified 3,234 buprenorphine prescribers with 245,016 patients receiving a new prescription of [buprenorphine](#). The monthly patient census for prescribers was 13 patients, with median episode duration of 53 days. Overall, 22, 49, 20, and 9 percent of prescribers had monthly censuses of one to three, four to 30, 31 to 75, and more than 75 patients, respectively. In years subsequent to 2010, there was an increase in patient census. The lowest census was seen in California and the highest in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

"Strategies to help current prescribers treat more [patients](#) safely and effectively could complement policy initiatives designed to increase access to treatment by increasing patient limits and number of waived prescribers," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry; two authors disclosed ties to the publishing industry.

**More information:** [Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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