Buprenorphine Induction Algorithm
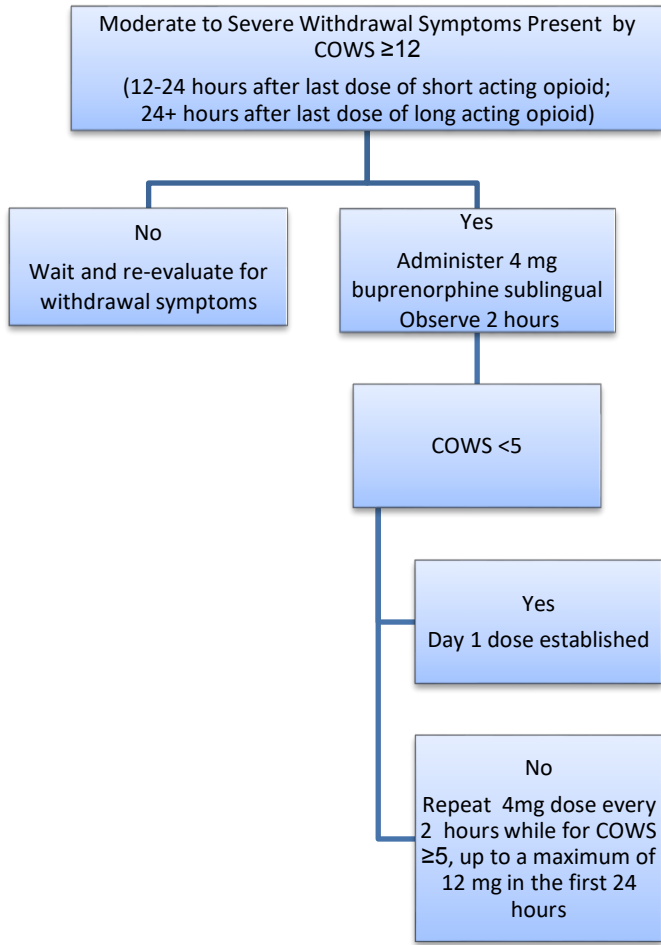
Day 1

Moderate to Severe Withdrawal Symptoms Present by COWS ≥12

(12-24 hours after last dose of short acting opioid; 24+ hours after last dose of long acting opioid)

No

Wait and re-evaluate for withdrawal symptoms

Yes

Administer 4 mg buprenorphine sublingual
Observe 2 hours

COWS <5

Yes

Day 1 dose established

No

Repeat 4mg dose every 2 hours while for COWS ≥5, up to a maximum of 12 mg in the first 24 hours

Day 2

Withdrawal symptoms present since last dose?

No

Administer total amount of buprenorphine administered on day 1

Daily dose established

Consider discharge with outpatient follow up

Yes

Administer total amount of buprenorphine that was administered on day 1 PLUS additional 2-4 mg

Observe 2 hours

Withdrawal symptoms relieved?

No

Administer 2-4mg buprenorphine

Observe2 hours

Yes

Daily dose established

Consider discharge with outpatient f/u

Withdrawal Symptoms Relieved?

Yes

Daily dose established

Discharge with outpatient follow up

No

Repeat 2mg dose every 2+ hours while withdrawal symptoms are still present, up to a maximum of 16mg on the second day

Consider discharge with outpatient follow up