COWS (Clinical opioid withdrawal scale) orders

- Administer and Score COWS q4hr for 48 hours while the patient is awake.

- Is patient pregnant? If yes, continue with this part of the protocol.

- **Protocol for Pregnancy: METHADONE**
  - COWS q 3h while awake, please discontinue COWS after 3 consecutive scores are less than 7
  - Initial COWS greater than 12 is moderate to severe withdrawal: give Methadone 20mg PO initial then 5mg PO q3h for cows > 7, max 1st day dose = 40mg.
  - Initial COWS between 8 and 12 is mild withdrawal: give Methadone 10mg PO initial then 5mg PO q3h for COWS > 7, max 1st day dose of 40mg.
  - After 24 hours, 2nd day: Total methadone dose over the last 24 hours should be given as day 2 starting dose. Then methadone 5mg PO q3h x 2 additional doses can be given to treat additional withdrawal symptoms for COWS > 7. Do not exceed 60mg.
  - After 48hours, 3rd day: Total methadone dose over the 2nd day should be given as day 3 starting dose. Then methadone 5mg PO q3h x 2 additional doses can be given to treat additional withdrawal symptoms for COWS > 7. Do not exceed 60mg.

- **Protocol for Pregnancy: Buprenorphine SL.**
  - COWS q 3h while awake, please discontinue COWS after 3 consecutive scores are less than 7
  - Initial COWS greater than 12 is moderate to severe withdrawal: give Buprenorphine 4mg SL initial dose then 2mg SL q3h for cows > 7, max 1st day dose = 8mg.
  - Initial COWS between 8 and 12 is mild withdrawal: give Buprenorphine 2mg SL initial then 2mg SL q3h for COWS > 7, max 1st day dose = 8mg.
  - After 24 hours, 2nd day: Total Buprenorphine SL dose over the last 24 hours should be given as day 2 starting dose. Then Buprenorphine SL 2mg q3h x 4 additional doses can be given to treat additional withdrawal symptoms for COWS > 7. Max 2nd day dose = 16mg.
  - After 48hours, 3rd day: Total Buprenorphine SL dose over the 2nd day should be given as day 3 starting dose. Then Buprenorphine SL 2mg q3h x 2 additional doses can be given to treat additional withdrawal symptoms for COWS > 7. Max 3rd day dose = 16mg.

- For non-pregnant patients:

- **Protocol for NOT Pregnancy: Buprenorphine SL.**
  - Administer and COWS q4hours x 48 hours
  - COWS q 4h while awake, please discontinue COWS after 3 consecutive scores are less than 7
  - Day 1 (first 24 hours): give Buprenorphine 4mg SL initial then 2mg SL q4h for COWS > 7, max 1st day dose = 8mg.
  - Day 2 (2nd 24 hours): Buprenorphine SL 2mg q4h for withdrawal symptoms for COWs > 7. Max 2nd day dose = 12mg.
  - Day 3 (3rd 24 hours): Give entire day 2 dose + additional 2mg dose. It is okay to give all at once. Max 3rd day dose = 12mg.
ADJUNCTIVE MEDICATION ORDERS

- Clonidine .1mg PO q 4h prn for COWA > 7, as long as SBP or = to 90mmHg
- Dicyclomine 10mg PO q6 h prn for abdominal cramping
- Hydroxyzine 25mg PO q4h prn for anxiety or agitation
- Ibuprofen 600mg PO q 6h prn for myalgias and arthralgias
- Tylenol 650mg PO q 6h prn for myalgias and arthralgias
- Trazodone 100mg PO qhs for insomnia for female patients
- Doxepin 25mg PO qhs prn for insomnia for male patients
- Loperamide 2mg PO after each loose bowel movement, not to exceed 8mg in 24 hours
  (or 2mg PO q6h prn)
- Zofran 4mg PO q4 h prn for severe nausea and vomiting

- Testing: UDS, pregnancy test, CBC, LFT, BMP, BAL, Hepatitis panel, HIV, EKG

- **Project DAWN referral:** Metro Health is the Cuyahoga county Project DAWN agency. For more information call, 800-554-5251 or 216-778-5677 or visit their website at [http://www.metrohealth.org/projectdawn](http://www.metrohealth.org/projectdawn)