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**HBO DOCUMENTARY FURTHER STIGMATIZES METHADONE TREATMENT**

The stigmatization of methadone treatment is perpetuated and reinforced by the HBO documentary film *Methadonia*, which premiered at the New York Film Festival, and will be aired on the HBO cable network in the coming month. The film provides a narrow view of methadone treatment through the eyes of the filmmaker, who portrays the stories of eight persons in various stages of recovery and relapse. In the documentary, methadone and pharmacotherapy treatment are framed as “liquid handcuffs,” which rob patients of the physical and emotional willpower to live normal, “drug free” lives. The documentary makes little reference to the more than 35 years of scientific and evidence-based research which has unequivocally affirmed methadone treatment’s safety and efficacy, and demonstrated that it frees former opioid abusers from the ravages of addiction.

Medication-assisted methadone treatment is a proven and well-established intervention in treating opioid addiction, reducing criminality and improving public health. Methadone treatment, which is received by over 240,000 persons nationwide in the United States, has saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of former opioid addicts throughout the world. Nevertheless, this vital modality has been widely stigmatized, owing in part to misconceptions about the science of addiction and methadone treatment’s critical role in treating addictive disease.

“This documentary neither provides an accurate depiction of the science that supports medication-assisted treatment, nor does it portray or properly represent the great majority of people for whom methadone treatment has proven to be the key to their recovery,” said Mark Parrino, M.P.A., President of the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (AATOD). “HBO has in the past produced exceptional documentaries that have enlightened and educated the public on issues of

