

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
School of Nursing

STUDENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY
Effective September 8, 2010

Purpose

The School of Nursing recognizes the importance of educating its students about the problems of substance abuse because this significant health risk, and in many cases, criminal matter, is unfortunately prevalent among healthcare providers. Aside from impacting upon the personal and psychological integrity of the abusers, substance abuse may significantly impact the ability of healthcare providers to administer safe, competent patient care. Recognizing that substance abuse is both a disease and a professional hazard, the School of Nursing has incorporated substance abuse topical content areas into its curriculum. The School of Nursing has likewise established this substance abuse policy.

This policy impacts upon and augments the student's ability to maintain personal and professional integrity, and facilitates the student's success both clinically and didactically. It promotes a healthy learning environment for the student. In the clinical setting, this policy enhances patient safety. It also fosters the development of professional nurses who are well educated about the prevalence and adverse outcomes of substance abuse.

Policy

This policy applies to all students who have matriculated in the School of Nursing. Any unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, diversion, or improper use of any substances by any student in the School of Nursing may constitute removal from clinical and/or cause for termination from the program. In addition, no student may consume or be under the influence of, or be in the possession of alcohol at any time the student is in the classroom and/or performing clinical duties. Improper use of alcohol may also constitute removal from clinical and/or cause for termination from the program. Students must also comply with all local, state, or federal laws and regulations controlling the possession, manufacture, use, or distribution of controlled or illegal substances and alcohol. Students must also adhere to all University of Pennsylvania Alcohol and Drug Policy. The policy can be found at: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/alcohol/policy2.php>.

In addition, there are circumstances in which students may need to take over the counter or prescribed medications that have the potential to impair their performance or personal behavior. As such, all students are responsible for being aware of the effect these medications may have on performance and must notify the Program Director or Course Director within 72 hours prior to clinical attendance or drug testing about the use of any medication that could impair performance or has the potential to influence a drug screen.

Failure or refusal to comply with the substance abuse policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. Any attempt to delay, hinder, or tamper with any testing or to alter the results of testing will be considered a refusal to comply with this policy. In addition, failure or refusal to comply with any aspect of the substance abuse policy may be reported to the University's

Office of Student Conduct for possible disciplinary action in accordance with the university's Student Conduct Policy.

Procedures

I. Drug Testing

Many clinical training sites, or institutions in which human research is being conducted, require that students undergo drug testing, similar to what is required of their employees, prior to placement at the sites. Therefore, all students involved in clinical practice settings, whether for clinical education purposes or for the recruitment of research subjects and/or the collection of research data, will need to undergo drug testing prior to working at clinical sites.

In addition, during enrollment in the School of Nursing, a student may be required to undergo drug or alcohol testing for cause when the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee, in consultation with the relevant Program or Course Director and relevant University experts, determines there is reasonable suspicion that the student is impaired due to illegal drug or alcohol use, or the use or misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medications based upon, but not limited to the following examples: unusual or aberrant behavior or patterns of abnormal or erratic behavior; physical symptoms of impairment; arrest or conviction for a drug or alcohol related offense; evidence of drug tampering, drug diversion, or misappropriation; direct observation of drug use or discrepant drug counts; alterations in student clinical and/or didactic performance that may not be attributed to other causes; following a work-related injury or illness, with evidence that it may have been related to use of a controlled substance; observation of poor judgment or careless acts which caused or had the potential to cause patient injury, jeopardize the safety of self or others, or resulted in damage to equipment

II: Reporting

A faculty or staff member who suspects possible substance abuse by a student must report the suspicious behavior to the Program Director or Course Director who will then immediately contact the Assistant Dean for Academic & Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Academic Programs. In the absence of the Course or Program Director, the faculty member observing the behavior should contact the Assistant Dean for Academic & Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Academic Programs. Any faculty member with evidence that an enrolled student has engaged in clinical care of patients and families or participated in class room work while impaired may also report their observations to the University's Office of Student Conduct.

A student who suspects possible substance abuse or a violation of this policy by another student has the responsibility to report this information. A report can be made to the student's faculty advisor and/or Program Director, the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, or the Associate Dean for Academic Programs. The identity of the individual making the report will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible consistent with the need to investigate the report and subject to legal requirements.

Any student arrested or convicted of violating any federal, state, or local law pertaining to the manufacture, possession, sale, use, or distribution of a drug or alcohol or misuse of prescribed medications must report this event to the Assistant Dean for Academic & Students Affairs and Associate Dean for Academic Programs within three days of the event and prior to any clinical contact with patients and families.

III: Testing Procedure

Drug and alcohol testing required by the School of Nursing will be conducted utilizing the following measures:

- A. The student must be tested at a facility approved by the School.
- B. The student must fully comply with the testing facility's methods and procedures for collecting samples
- C. The test shall screen for the use of the controlled substances (examples listed in Appendix 1) or any other controlled substances that are suspected of being abused or used by the student.
- D. Urine, serum, hair, and saliva analysis or a combination of these may be tested.
- E. The student will disclose any prescribed or over-the-counter medications, as well as any dietary habits that could modify testing results.
- F. If the accuracy of a positive test is disputed by the student, the student may request a retesting of samples by the facility; however, the cost of the additional testing would be borne by the student. Testing done outside the appropriate window of time will not be considered valid.
- G. Substance abuse is verified if either: (i) the positive test result is not disputed, or (ii) if the student-requested retest is positive.
- H. If the test is inconclusive, the screening will be treated as positive until definitive analysis by alternate testing is accomplished. During this time the student will be not permitted to have any contact with patients and families but may be allowed to attend classes, pending the approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Programs.
- I. The testing facility will make a final report of the test results (positive, negative, or inconclusive) to the Assistant Dean for Academic & Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Academic Programs.
- J. A student who is required to and submits to drug and alcohol screening will be expected to authorize the release of the results to the School and other relevant University offices (CAPS/SHS).

All interim actions including requiring the student to undergo drug or alcohol testing, to refrain from clinical contact with patients and families, or to refrain from attending classes will be determined by the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee in consultation with the relevant Program or Course Director and relevant University experts. In drug or alcohol testing for cause cases, the cost of any required drug or alcohol testing will be borne by the School of Nursing at a facility chosen by the School of Nursing. A student who refuses to submit to testing will be regarded as having voluntarily relinquished his/her clinical responsibilities. Any attempt to delay, hinder, or tamper with any testing or to alter the results of testing will be considered a refusal to submit to testing and may result in an inference of impairment and/or a violation of this policy.

Confidentiality

The requirement that a student be tested, as well as the test results, will remain confidential and disclosed only to those individuals within University of Pennsylvania or an affiliated clinical site with a need to know or as required by law. Upon written request, students will be provided a copy of test

results. As required by law, MSN students who have been suspected of substance abuse will be reported to the appropriate State Boards of Nursing where the student is currently licensed.

III. Review by Academic Standards and Progressions Committee

Once evidence has been gathered documenting the use or suspected use of controlled substances and/or impairment, the student's case will be discussed at a meeting of the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee. The Committee will consider all evidence to determine next steps including removal from clinical, leave of absence, and/or dismissal from the program. A student who is suspected of violating this policy may submit written information to the Committee for their review.

IV. Voluntary Self-Disclosure

Students who voluntarily self-disclose a substance or alcohol abuse problem to a faculty member, academic advisor, Office of Student Services staff member or the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, prior to a positive drug/alcohol test result, and who are willing to enter in and complete an appropriate program of treatment may be granted a medical leave of absence while she/ he undergoes treatment. In consultation with her/his health care provider and providers from the University (Counseling and Psychological Services and/or the Student Health Service), a treatment program will be identified and the student will be assisted in entering it. The student must sign appropriate University forms providing designated University providers (Counseling and Psychological Services and Student Health Services) to communicate with the student's private providers about her/ his recovery status and with the School of Nursing.

V. Treatment and Counseling Resources

Students who are concerned that they may have a substance or alcohol abuse problem are encouraged to seek appropriate assessment, treatment, and counseling from qualified health care professionals. The following websites are a list of some treatment and counseling services that are available to students:

American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Peer Assistance www.aana.com/peerassist.aspx
Alcoholics Anonymous www.alcoholic-anonymous.org/
American Society of Addictive Medicine www.asam.org
Narcotic Anonymous <http://wsoinc.com/>
National Directory of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Treatment Programs <http://dasis3.samhsa.gov/>
Penn Counseling and Psychological Services www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps/
Penn Student Health Service www.vpul.upenn.edu/shs/
Pennsylvania Bureau of Professional & Occupational Affairs Professional Health Monitoring Programs
http://www.dos.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/professional_health_monitoring_programs_%28phmp%29/12470

VI. Reentry into the Academic and Clinical Environment

Return from medical leave of absence will be considered by the Assistant Dean for Academic & Student Affairs, the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and approval of the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee following successful treatment and sustained progress in addition to other

conditions that may be stipulated in the leave of absence letter. All relevant University and School required documents must be completed, including a plan for successful return to course and clinical work that is approved by the student's health care provider, relevant University experts, (Counseling and Psychological Services and Student Health Services) and the School of Nursing. Factors that have been identified as helpful for reentry into practice include 12-step program participation, random drug screening, and sponsorship in a support group. The student must also provide medical clearance from the appropriate individual coordinating therapeutic intervention and evidence of current, active nursing licensure (if a graduate student). Re-entry to the School of Nursing will be determined in consultation with the Counseling and Psychological Services and Student Health Services offices.

Depending upon the length of absence from the program, the student may be required to restart the clinical and didactic components of their plan of study. Alternatively, the student may only be required to repeat specific semesters of clinical and didactic study, based on the decision of the Academic Standards and Progressions Committee in consultation with relevant Program Director or Course Director.

Before reentry into the School of Nursing, conditions will be established between University of Pennsylvania's School of Nursing and the recovering student. The conditions will be appropriately individualized toward the particular situation and needs of the student. A student recovering from substance abuse will be monitored closely, particularly in clinical practice. Frequent monitoring to ensure the student remains substance free will be required.

Reentry can be difficult for students, especially those who have just started their educational program and have limited time invested in the program. Reentry after relapse into substance abuse is definitely not advised for any student. Reentry into a nursing program's curriculum after a period of absence, no matter what the reason, can be a stressful time of readjustment. A student who has been in rehabilitation for substance abuse requires the same period of adjustment as a person who has been away from clinical and didactic arena for any other reason. A student in recovery who is reentering the program will be encouraged not to resume their course of study too hastily, but instead allow themselves time to develop appropriate support systems to facilitate the reentry.

A student in recovery who is permitted to reenter the School of Nursing must comply with the conditions of return delineated as part of the program reentry.

Appendix 1 – Examples of Prohibited Controlled Substances

The list of controlled substances that the University of Pennsylvania, School of Nursing's testing facility will normally screen for includes common street drugs and those drugs that a nursing student would normally have access to and could potentially abuse. Drugs monitored include but are not limited to:

- Alcohol
- Alfentanil
- *Amphetamines
- *Barbiturates
- *Benzodiazepines
- Butorphanol (Stadol)
- Cannabinoids
- *Cocaine Metabolites
- Fentanyl
- Ketamine
- *Marijuana Metabolites
- MDMA (ecstasy)
- *Methadone
- Nalbuphine (Nubain)
- *Opiates
- *PCP
- Propofol
- *Propoxyphene
- Remifentanyl
- Sevoflurane
- Sufentanil
- Tramadol

*tested for with a typical "9-panel" screening