

Medical and Physician Assistant (PA) Student Evaluation, Treatment and Rehabilitation for Physical, Mental Health and Substance Dependency/Abuse Conditions – The North Dakota Professional Health Program

Section: 4

Policy number: 4.22

Responsible Office: Student Affairs and Admissions

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POLICY STATEMENT

A medical or physician assistant (PA) student may voluntarily pursue evaluation, treatment and rehabilitation for physical or mental health and substance dependency/abuse issues through the North Dakota Professional Health Program (ND PHP) as a self-referral. Alternatively, a student may be involuntarily referred to, i.e. required to enroll in, the ND PHP by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs & Admissions, the Medical Student Academic Performance Committee, Chair of the Department of PA Studies (DPAS), or the DPAS Faculty Committee of the Whole.

REASON for POLICY

In 1973 the American Medical Association defined the impaired physician as one who is unable to fulfill professional and personal responsibilities because of a psychiatric illness, alcoholism, or drug dependency. (American Family Physician Nov 1, 2009) An impaired student is one who is not able to fulfill their educational, professional or personal responsibilities as the result of psychiatric illness or substance use disorder (SUD).

Section 15-52-01 of the ND Century Code states in part, “The primary purpose of the University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences is to educate physicians and other health professionals for subsequent service in North Dakota.” This mandate includes not only the development of well-educated individuals, but also the development of self-care strategies for the state’s future physicians and health professionals.

The Professional Health Program of North Dakota is patterned after successful programs in other states where it has proven to be a successful mechanism for impaired physicians and PAs to gain the confidential help that they need for addiction or other mental illnesses without putting their license at risk. Students who are actively participating in the ND PHP may continue with their medical and PA curriculum as directed by the monitoring program.

SCOPE of POLICY

This policy applies to:

√Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

√Faculty

√Managers and supervisors

√Staff

√Students

WEB SITE REFERENCES

Policy Office: <http://www.med.und.edu/policies/index.cfm>

Responsible Office: <http://www.med.und.edu/student-affairs-admissions/>

PROCEDURES

Self-Referral:

A medical or PA student may voluntarily self-refer to the ND PHP for evaluation and monitoring.

1. Enrollment in the ND PHP program alone shall not be a reason for an MSAPC or DPAS Faculty Committee of the Whole hearing. A student who is actively participating in the ND PHP may continue in the medical or PA curriculum as directed by the monitoring program.
- 2.
3. A medical or PA student in ND PHP-monitoring remains subject to all institutional rules and policies, state and federal laws. Participation in the program is not a reason for sanctions and/or dismissal from the program leading to the MD or MPAS degree.
4. Relapses may be considered a usual part of recovery. A medical or PA student who experiences a relapse which results in legal, civil or institutional action shall be subject to the usual disciplinary processes.
5. A medical or PA student who is not compliant with care or who is released from monitoring for any reason, other than satisfactory completion of the program, shall be reported by ND PHP to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs & Admissions or the DPAS Chair. The student who is not compliant with the program shall be referred for an MSAPC or DPAS Faculty Committee of the Whole hearing for unprofessional behavior.
6. The student is responsible for all costs (including, but not limited to, random drug testing, program costs, and mileage) associated with the program.

Involuntary Referral:

A medical or PA student may be involuntarily referred to, i.e. required to enroll in, the ND PHP for evaluation and/or monitoring. This may be accomplished through a referral by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs & Admissions, the Chair of the DPAS, as the result of an MSAPC hearing or as a referral by the DPAS Faculty Committee of the Whole.

1. Enrollment in the ND PHP program alone shall not be a reason for an MSAPC or DPAS Faculty Committee of the Whole hearing. A student who is actively participating in the ND PHP may continue in the medical or PA curriculum as directed by the monitoring program. ND PHP will notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions of a UND SMHS medical student who enrolls in the program or the DPAS Chair of a UND PA student who enrolls in the program.

2. A medical or PA student in ND PHP-monitoring remains subject to all instructional rules and policies, state and federal laws. Participation in the program is not a reason for sanctions and/or dismissal from the program leading to the MD or MPAS degree.
3. Relapses may be considered a usual part of recovery. A medical or PA student who experiences a relapse which results in legal, civil or institutional action shall be subject to the usual disciplinary processes.
4. A medical or PA student who is not compliant with care or who is released from monitoring for any reason, other than satisfactory completion of the program, shall be reported by ND PHP to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs & Admissions or the DPAS Chair. The ND PHP enrolled student who is not compliant with the program shall be referred to an MSAPC hearing or the DPAS Faculty Committee of the Whole hearing for unprofessional behavior.
5. The student is responsible for all costs (including, but not limited to, random drug testing, program costs, and mileage) associated with the program.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Student	Seek evaluation, treatment and rehabilitation for physical, mental health and/or substance dependency/abuse issues..
Associate Dean for Student Affairs & Admissions	Inform students of the ND PHP services and the possible consequences of seeking or not seeking treatment. Inform MSAPC of any noncompliance with a treatment plan by medical students enrolled in the ND PHP
Chair, Department of PA Studies	Inform students of the ND PHP services and the possible consequences of seeking or not seeking treatment. Inform DPAS Faculty Committee of the Whole of any noncompliance with a treatment plan by PA students enrolled in the ND PHP
ND PHP	With the exception of self-referral students, notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs & Admissions or the Chair of the Department of PA Studies of the student's participation, progress, and compliance with the treatment plan and determine safety of returning to practice for UND SMHS students who are enrolled in the program

DEFINITIONS

Impairment	Impairment is defined as the condition of being unable to perform one's professional duties and responsibilities in a reasonable manner, consistent with professional standards. Cognitive function, judgment, reaction time, and the ability to handle stress are increasingly affected. (taken from ND PHP website)
ND PHP	North Dakota Professional Health Program
UND SMHS	University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences
MSAPC	Medical Student Academic Performance Committee
DPAS	Department of Physician Assistant Studies

Self-referral	Self-referral refers to a student who voluntarily presents themselves to the ND PHP for assessment and/or treatment.
Involuntary referral	Involuntary referral defines a situation in which the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions, MSAPC, DPAS chairperson, and/or the DPAS committee of the whole provides the name of the student directly to ND PHP.

RELATED INFORMATION

3.7 Participation in Education as it Relates to Student Health	https://med.und.edu/about/policies/ files/docs/3.7-participation-in-education-policy-2024.pdf
SMHS Policy Page	https://med.und.edu/policies/index.html
3.6 Drug and Alcohol Screening and Education Program	https://med.und.edu/about/policies/ files/docs/3.6-drug-alcohol-screening-education-6.1.23-final.pdf

CONTACT INFORMATION

Specific questions should be directed to the following:

Subject	Contact	Telephone/FAX	Office/Dept. Email/Web
Policy clarification	Student Affairs and Admissions	(701)777.4221/777.4942	SAA@UND.edu
SMHS Student Injury	Student Affairs and Admissions	(701)777.4221/777.4942	SAA@UND.edu

REVISION RECORD

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