

Oregon State Board of Nursing

Nurse Monitoring Program

*An Alternative to Discipline
for Nurses with
Substance Dependencies,
Mental Health Disorders
or Physical Disabilities*

Philosophy

The Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN) believes alcoholism and drug addiction are primary, progressive and chronic diseases. The OSBN also believes the problems resulting from substance dependence or abuse, mental health disorders or physical disabilities may impair a nurse's ability to safely practice nursing.

The Nurse Monitoring Program (NMP) is a confidential option developed for nurses suffering from these disorders. It offers the impaired nurse an opportunity to seek treatment rather than be subjected to censure and discipline. Often, the nurse may continue the practice of nursing or return to practice during recovery. The OSBN's primary concerns are the health and safety of the public, and the nurses' recovery from impairment.

Any nurse whose practice is affected due to substance dependence or abuse, a mental health disorder or a physical disability has the opportunity to enter the Nurse Monitoring Program.

The program should not be viewed as a treatment program or as a punishment. Rather, the Nurse Monitoring Program refers affected nurses to treatment programs and strives to keep nurses in the practice of nursing while protecting the public's safety.

Admission

Advanced practice nurses, Registered Nurses or Licensed Practical Nurses may seek admission to the program by:

- self-referral;
- an employer referral; or
- a referral from a family member, friend or nurse peer.

Referrals can be made by calling the NMP Assistant at 971-673-0655.

How the Program Works

Basic Tenents

As a basic condition of admission, all nurses in the program must participate in treatment appropriate for their problem, check-in regularly with NMP staff and follow all other terms of the Program. The program's length is five years. Terms and conditions of the program are individualized according to each nurse's situation and needs. Monitoring needs differ slightly, depending on whether the nurse has a chemical dependency, mental health disorder or physical disability.

Costs of treatment and any screening tests and/or medications are the responsibility of the program participant.

Return to Work

Each nurse's case is handled individually, depending on her/his treatment needs.

In cases of substance dependence or abuse, there is often a period of time immediately after a nurse enters treatment that she/he

may not be able to work in a nursing role (two weeks to six months, depending on the specific situation). NMP staff will be in contact with the nurse's treatment counselor and/or care provider and determine the nurse's eligibility to work. When the nurse's treatment level allows her/him to perform nursing duties, the NMP staff will work with her/him to select an appropriate work setting where there is on-site supervision.

In all cases, the NMP staff strives to balance the nurse's need to work with the public's safety.

Confidentiality

Participation in the Nurse Monitoring Program allows a nurse with a substance dependence, a mental health disorder or physical disability to perform monitored nursing duties without formal disciplinary action by the OSBN. Participation in the NMP is not a matter of public record. Only those in the nurse's employment setting who need to know, such as the nurse's immediate supervisor or facility human resources department, will be advised of a nurse's involvement in the program.

Program participants and their records will be referred to the OSBN for investigation and possible disciplinary action if the participants fail to comply with the terms and conditions of the program.

For More Information

Please call us at 971-673-0655
between 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m., or write us at:

Oregon State Board of Nursing
Nurse Monitoring Program
17938 SW Upper Boones Ferry Rd.
Portland, OR 97224-7012

FAX: 971-673-0684

E-Mail: oregon.bn.info@state.or.us

Automated License Verification Line:

971-673-0679

Online License Verification:

www.oregon.gov/OSBN

(click on “Online License Verification”)



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