About the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission defines and regulates standards of nursing conduct and practice in Washington State. WHPS is the commission's approved substance use monitoring program under RCW 18.130.175.

Education and Outreach for Your Organization

WHPS provides free tailored educational presentations and consultation for your organization.

Our education and outreach activities help to increase awareness and understanding about substance use disorder, reduce stigma, and promote a Just Culture approach.

Speaking up saves lives!

WHPS Supports a Culture of Recovery and Accountability

The American Nurses Association estimates that 6-8% of nurses have experienced impaired performance due to substance use (alcohol or drugs).

WHPS protects the public by providing early intervention, referral to treatment, and structured monitoring services. Early intervention is key to ensuring personal health and safe patient care.

Our team is available to contact for services, answer questions, and provide education.

Contact us:
360-236-2880, option #1
whps@doh.wa.gov

WHPS

Washington Health Professional Services

TOGETHER

Washington State Department of Health

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A program for nurses affected by substance use disorder

What is WHPS?

WHPS is a **non-public** program for nurses whose practice may be affected by substance use.

Participation allows nurses to protect their licenses while receiving the help they need to recover from substance use disorder.

WHPS intends for nurses to be treated and monitored so they can return to or continue to practice their profession in a way that safeguards the public.

What is substance use disorder?

Substance use disorder is a chronic, progressive disease, not a moral weakness. About 15% of nurses may be diagnosed with substance use disorder during their careers. Substance use disorder is **treatable,** and outcomes are positive when the disease is identified and treated early.

How does it work?

The WHPS program includes:

- A referral for evaluation and treatment
- Routine contact with a dedicated case management team
- Peer support and recovery-oriented meetings
- Random drug testing
- Practice support
- The opportunity to demonstrate recovery

Nurse monitoring programs have **positive outcomes** with success rates upwards of 70%. The majority of nurses in monitoring achieve long-term recovery and continue to practice in their profession.

How do I participate?

Voluntarily Participation

You may participate in WHPS voluntarily.

- If you contact WHPS and enroll voluntarily, you get immediate referral to treatment and monitoring services.
- In addition, you might not be subject to disciplinary action and your participation not made known to the commission as long as you meet program requirements.

Contact us: 360-236-2880, option #1, or whps@doh.wa.gov.

Nursing Commission Referral

The commission may refer nurses to WHPS as part of disciplinary action, or as an alternative to disciplinary action when there is no patient harm (RCW 18.130.160).

Questions?

Please reach out to 360-236-2880, option #1, or whps@doh.wa.gov