



#### **TITLE OF POLICY**

UNC Physician Assistant Program Controlled Substances Policy

#### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Our purpose is to identify and address problems associated with Controlled Substance abuse or other Impairment. This policy describes the conditions under which UNC Physician Assistant (UNC PA) students may be required to undergo testing for Controlled and/or Restricted Substances and to describe the consequences of a positive Screening for Controlled and/or Restricted Substances.

#### **RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy will be reviewed in even-numbered year as needed by the Program Manager and Clinical Education, elevating any policy amendments to the Program Director for approval.

#### **ARC-PA STANDARD(S) ADDRESSED**

A3.02: The program must define, publish, and make readily available and consistently apply its policies and practices to all students.

#### **DEFINITION**

**Controlled Substances:** Include, but are not limited to marijuana, opiates, amphetamines, barbiturates, heroin, and similar drugs whose possession and use are prohibited under state or federal law; so-called "designer drugs," "look-alikes," synthetic drugs, and similar substances.

**Restricted Substances:** Prescription drugs, unless validly prescribed by a student's physician and used as prescribed, and other substances whose use may be abused although they are available legally (such as alcohol, cough syrup and other over-the-counter medications), and substances not intended for human consumption (such as glue).

**Positive Test:** Positive result from testing for the presence of medications, Controlled Substances or Restricted Substances. For Controlled Substances, any Positive Test for a Controlled Substance. For Restricted Substances classified as drugs, a Positive Test for the drug in its pure form or its metabolites at or above the specified cutoff levels by the laboratory performing the test is considered a Positive Test.

**Impairment:** State of an individual who is affected by consumption of Controlled Substances and/or Restricted Substances. Individuals taking medications prescribed by a physician or over-the-counter medications should adhere to the terms of the prescription and to any activity restrictions recommended by the physician or manufacturer.

**Screening:** Examination performed for the purpose of assessing Impairment.

**Reasonable Suspicion:** An objective, justifiable presumption that is based on specific facts, observations or circumstances that justifies the Screening of a student for Controlled Substances and/or Restricted Substances.

## POLICY

The following conditions are prohibited while enrolled at UNC, on duty, in call, other otherwise engaged in UNC PAP business, on or off the UNC PAP premises:

- The illegal use, abuse, possession, manufacture, dispensation, distribution of, or Impairment by Controlled Substances or Restricted Substances.

UNC PA students will be screened annually for Controlled Substances and/or Restricted Substances.

UNC PA students may also be required to undergo Screening for Controlled Substances and/or Restricted Substances under the following conditions:

- Reasonable Suspicion that a substance abuse problem exists.
- Drug screen is required by a clinical site (e.g., community preceptor, AHEC site).
- At the student's request (e.g., away elective).
- Reasonable Suspicion that a student is under the influence of a Controlled Substance or Restricted Substance.

Physician Assistant students may be required to undergo drug or alcohol screening if they exhibit behaviors that amount to Reasonable Suspicion of Impairment. The cost of the screening will be borne by the student. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The appearance of impairment or intoxication at school or in a clinical setting
- Unusual or aberrant behavior
- Conviction for an offense involving a Controlled Substance or Restricted Substance
- Evidence of drug tampering or misappropriation

Students may voluntarily request to undergo drug Screening. Voluntary testing is most often requested for extramural (away) electives. Students undergoing Screening for away electives should contact the Director of Clinical Education for information about recommended laboratories and procedures.

## PROCEDURES

A student with a Positive Test for Controlled Substances or Restricted Substances will be removed from the student's clinical rotation site until the Positive Test can be investigated. This removal may result in the student receiving a grade of either "Incomplete" or "Withdraw" for the clinical rotation.

In the case of a confirmed rest result, the student will be referred to UNC-Chapel Hill Campus Health Services for a medical evaluation and supportive therapy. The student will also be referred to the University Emergency Evaluation and Action Committee (EEAC) to assess whether the student presents a danger to himself/herself or to the campus community. The Policy and Procedures for the EEAC can be found at <https://unc.policystat.com/policy/4639588/latest>. Students violating this policy may also be referred to the Honor System or to the UNC PAP Student Progress Committee.

Marijuana use is not legal in North Carolina. A Positive Test for marijuana will be investigated regardless of whether or not marijuana was consumed in a state or country where marijuana or related substances are legal.

Students who anticipate a positive test due to legally prescribed medications will provide documentation of the prescription from a physician to avoid instigating an investigation and removal from the clinical rotation

site. Documentation can include signed letter from physician, pill bottle with student's name/ date of prescription or signed prescription and should be submitted to the designated Medical Review Officer (MRO).

Students with Positive Tests due to legally prescribed medications will be asked to provide documentation of the prescription from a physician. Students with Positive Tests providing documentation of legally prescribed medication(s) will be cleared to return to their clinical sites.

**PUBLISHED**

- UNC PA Program Policies and Procedures web page: <https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/unc-pa/students/policies-procedures/>
- UNC PA Program Student Handbook

**HISTORY OF APPROVAL AND UPDATES**

Initially approved by Program Director, October 29,2020