MUSC College of Medicine
Policy for Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention

The College of Medicine fully adheres to the MUSC University Policy for Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention. This policy can be found at: http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/studenthandbook/Policies/alcoholabuse.html

The College of Medicine is committed to the health and well-being of its student body. Alcohol and drug misuse and abuse can be detrimental to one’s overall physical and emotional health, as well as academic and/or professional performance. It is the ethical responsibility of the University and its members to protect each other from high-risk and excessive use of alcohol and other drugs and to assist individuals who may have substance abuse problems in securing appropriate assistance. As part of this commitment, the College of Medicine complies with and upholds all federal, state, and local laws that regulate or prohibit the possession, use or distribution of alcoholic beverages or illicit drugs. In addition, many clinical sites now require that our medical students be screened for drug and alcohol use.

The College of Medicine is also committed to ensuring the highest level of professionalism demonstrated by our students at all times. As a student in the College of Medicine, students are expected to act as professionals at all times (both on and off campus). Students are seen by the public as not only representatives of themselves but MUSC as well. Therefore, even casual use of illicit substances, binge drinking, or misuse of prescription drugs could be seen as unprofessional and unsafe.

In addition to the University procedures, the College of Medicine has a standard process for dealing with issues related to substance use, abuse, or dependence, in the case when:
1) A student tests positive in a drug or alcohol screen,
2) Is arrested involving the use of alcohol or drugs, or
3) Has been referred to the Dean's Office for concerns of impairment

The student will first meet with either the Associate Dean of Students or Senior Associate Dean of Medical Education. This meeting will occur in conjunction with the Director of Academics & Student Support. A Behavioral Monitoring plan will be established during the initial meeting to ensure the wellness of the student and patients. The details of the plan will be left up to the discretion of the Associate Dean of Students, Senior Associate Dean of Medical Education, and Director of Academics & Student Support based on the student's individual needs.

The Behavioral Monitoring plans may include but are not limited to:
1) Mandated treatment at Counseling and Psychological Services
2) Mandated participation in the Wellness Council
3) Required random drug and alcohol screening
4) Other required treatments as stipulated by clinicians caring for the student

The student will not be able to participate in clinical work until his/her drug and alcohol screens are negative. Once drug and alcohol screens are negative, the Associate Dean of Students and/or his designee, in conjunction with the clinicians caring for the student, will assess the student's readiness to resume clinical responsibilities.

Criminal Arrests and Convictions - Students arrested or convicted under a criminal statute for a drug/alcohol-related offense are required to notify their dean or the dean’s designated representative no later than five days after such occurrence. The following are the sanctions for students convicted of substance-abuse-related crimes which occur on premises or property owned or controlled by the university:
1. Any student convicted of illegal use, possession, and/or sale of a drug or narcotic shall be suspended from the institution for a specific period of time and/or suspended of rights and privileges as a student.

2. A felony conviction of a violation of any criminal drug statute for use, possession, dispersion, distribution, or manufacture of an illegal drug will result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Every student entering or continuing his/her studies in the College of Medicine acknowledges and consents to taking a drug screen administered for probable cause or as a requirement for a rotation or educational activity. The student hereby grants permission for the results of all such tests to be released or used for academic or disciplinary purposes as deemed appropriate by College of Medicine officials. Failure to present for a mandatory drug screening will be considered a breach in professionalism and will be addressed accordingly. These students may be referred to the Professional Standards Subcommittee. The College of Medicine encourages all impaired students to seek help voluntarily and favors the earliest possible intervention. MUSC will make treatment and referral services available to students.

The College of Medicine respects the right to confidentiality of recovering students and will assist them to continue their education and employment. However, MUSC also respects the rights of patients and others and seeks to protect them from the harm that impaired students may cause. Hence, impaired students who fail to cooperate with appropriate treatment programs are subject to disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal as deemed appropriate by the Dean of the College of Medicine.

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