



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Hospital Department

Section: Medical Staff
Subject: **Impaired Practitioner**
Number: MED 01.007

Attachments:
Date Effective: 02/16/10
Date Reviewed:

PURPOSE

The Bellevue Medical Center and its medical staff are committed to providing patients with quality care. The delivery of quality care can be compromised if a clinician is suffering from impairment.

The Practitioner Health Committee shall recommend to the Credentials Committee, the Medical Executive Committee and the Chief Executive Officer additional educational materials beyond this policy and suggested educational programs that address clinician health and emphasize prevention, diagnosis and treatment of physical, psychiatric and emotional illness for the education of the medical staff and other professional healthcare providers.

DEFINITION:

Impairment is defined as any damage or decline in physical or cognitive function due to medical or psychiatric illness, abuse of alcohol, legal or illegal prescription drugs, or illicit drugs or other substances.

Practitioners: This policy shall apply to all members of the Medical Staff of Bellevue Medical Center (to include MD/DOs, DDS/DMDs, DPMs), Advance Practice Registered Nurses, Physician Assistants, Psychologists and participants of graduate medical education training programs.

POLICY:

Practitioners are prohibited from on-the-job possession, sale, or use of and/or impairment from alcohol, illegal drugs or any controlled substances. Medications prescribed for the practitioner by a licensed independent practitioner for health reasons may be used as directed, but cannot result in physical or cognitive impairment.

PROCEDURE:

Duty to Report:

Any practitioner or staff member who has reason to believe that another practitioner is under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or improper use of controlled substances, and/or possesses or sells illegal drugs or controlled substances, and/or is otherwise medically or psychiatrically impaired or potentially impaired, shall report such knowledge as evidence to the President of the Medical Staff and/or Chief Medical Officer. All practitioners agree, as a condition of staff membership, to accept a clinical evaluation to determine impairment arranged by the President of the Medical Staff. Any practitioner suspected of impairment will refrain from providing patient care in any manner until the clinical evaluation (including test results, as appropriate) is completed.

Testing and Screening:

Bellevue Medical Center reserves the right to require a practitioner who is reasonably suspected of impairment to undergo a clinical exam which may include a physical examination, psychiatric evaluation, blood testing and/or urinalysis to ascertain the cause of the impairment (the "clinical examination"). A practitioner may be subject to such clinical examination in the following circumstances:

1. Exhibits behavior that is normally associated with controlled substance, alcohol or illegal drug use/abuse;
2. Is involved in other instances where alcohol or substance abuse is suspected to be a contributing factor to a work related incident or on-the-job accident;
3. Exhibits behavior consistent with medical impairment, cognitive dysfunction or psychiatric illness.

Process:

A. Substance Abuse Impairment

1. Practitioners suspected of substance abuse as outlined above (observable behavior) will be reported to the President of the Medical Staff and/or Chief Medical Officer or their designee for immediate intervention, and an

incident report will be completed and provided to Medical Staff Services.

2. The practitioner is to be interviewed by the President of the Medical Staff and/or Chief Medical Officer or their designee, using guidelines outlined in the medical staff bylaws.
3. Practitioners refusing to agree to the interview when reasonable evidence is presented of impairment will be subject to immediate disciplinary action.
4. If upon completion of the interview, the practitioner is felt to be impaired, a clinical examination with possible testing will be conducted.
5. The clinical exam will be performed with concern for the practitioner's dignity and, to the extent possible, with respect to his or her confidentiality. Results of clinical evaluations will be maintained in the practitioner's quality file.
 - a. Specimens must be collected within two (2) hours of request. Costs for obtaining the specimens, transportation to the laboratory and transportation home for the practitioner are assumed by the hospital.
6. The practitioner will sign a release of information for clinical examination and testing. Practitioners who refuse to sign the form when so requested are subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or termination.
7. If the examination and test results are negative, the practitioner may immediately return to patient care/practice, and this will be reported in the practitioner's quality file.
8. If the clinical examination and/or testing confirm impairment, the practitioner may be subject to immediate disciplinary action as determined by the Medical Staff Bylaws. Where appropriate, the physician is encouraged to participate in the Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program.

B. Physical, Cognitive, or Psychiatric Impairment

1. Physicians suspected of physical, cognitive, or psychiatric impairment will be reported to the President of the Medical Staff and/or Chief Medical Officer.
2. The practitioner is to be interviewed by the President of the Medical Staff and/or Chief Medical Officer, using guidelines outlined in the Medical Staff Bylaws.
3. Practitioners refusing to agree to the interview when reasonable evidence is presented of impairment may be subject to immediate precautionary suspension or disciplinary action.
4. If upon completion of the interview, the practitioner is felt to be impaired, a clinical examination with possible testing will be conducted.
5. The clinical exam will be performed with concern for the practitioner's dignity and, to the extent possible, with respect for his or her confidentiality. Results of clinical evaluations and testing will be maintained in the practitioner's quality file.
6. The practitioner will sign a release of information for clinical examination and testing. Practitioners who refuse to sign a release when so requested are subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or termination of medical staff membership.
7. If the examination and test results are negative, the practitioner may immediately return to patient care/practice, and this will be recorded in the practitioner's quality file.
8. If the clinical examination and/or testing confirm impairment, the practitioner may be subject to immediate action as determined by the Medical Staff Bylaws.

Voluntary Disclosure

The hospital and medical staff are concerned about the health and welfare of their practitioners and encourage practitioners who suspect or know that they are, or are becoming impaired, to temporarily cease patient care/practice and voluntarily seek appropriate evaluation and treatment. Practitioners who voluntarily admit to having substance abuse problem and request assistance prior to identification will be offered a leave of absence to seek evaluation and treatment. They will not be subject to disciplinary action by the medical staff and will be afforded all rights as outlined in the medical staff bylaws.

Staff Accountability

- Practitioner Health Committee
- Medical Executive Committee
- Board of Managers

Department Approval

Signed: George Greene

Title: Manager

Department: Medical Staff

Administrative Approval

Signed: Marlin Stahl, MD

Title: Chief Medical Officer