

Augusta University  
House Staff Policies and Procedures

Policy  
HS 1.0 Chemical/Substance Abuse

Source  
Graduate Medical Education Office

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Purpose

To provide guidelines regarding chemical/substance abuse/dependence of Housestaff at Augusta University

1.0 Policy Statements

- 1.1 Augusta University is committed to the medical education and treatment of Housestaff who enter treatment for chemical dependence. However, patient safety must take priority.
- 1.2 Nothing in this policy shall prevent Program Directors from taking disciplinary action against Housestaff, where appropriate. However, Housestaff are afforded Due Process. See HS13.0.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Substance abuse shall mean:

- 2.1.1 The use or possession of any drug in a manner prohibited by law; or
- 2.1.2 The use of alcohol, any drug, or other substance in such a way that the user's performance as a healthcare provider is impaired.

2.2 Housestaff shall mean:

A generic term used to include interns, residents, and fellows in GME Training Programs at Augusta University.

3.0 Procedures

- 3.1 The Department Chairperson and/or Program Director along with Faculty, Staff, and peers will be responsible for identifying a Housestaff, as well as other colleagues, that may be suffering from untreated or relapsing chemical dependence and/or substance abuse. A Housestaff suspected of suffering from active chemical dependence and/or substance abuse may be immediately placed on leave of absence at discretion of the Program Director and referred for appropriate treatment as needed. Please see HS7.0. Graduate Medical Education Office and the DIO must be informed. The DIO will assist the Program in contacting the Employee-Faculty Assistance Program at Augusta University if appropriate.
- 3.2 If impairment is suspected, the DIO, Program Director or designee, or acting supervisor (e.g., site director, current attending faculty member, etc.) should refer the Housestaff to Employee Health for drug testing sample collection during regular business hours or the Emergency Department after business hours in accordance with the AU Substance Abuse policy. If referred by acting supervisor, the Program Director and DIO should be notified as soon as possible.  
<https://www.augusta.edu/compliance/policyinfo/policy/substance-abuse-policy.pdf>

**The procedure for “For Cause Testing” of Housestaff is as follows:**

- 3.2.1 “GME For Cause Testing Authorization” must be completed by the DIO, Program Director or their designee, or active supervisor (for instances when the DIO and Program Director are not available). This form is available in the GME office and has been provided to Program Directors.
- 3.2.2 House Staff must be escorted to the sample collection site by their Program Director or another Program representative designated by the Program Director, DIO, or acting supervisor. The Housestaff member must not drive themselves to the sample collection site.
- 3.2.3 If after regular business hours, the Emergency Department charge nurse will be notified by the Program designee that For Cause Testing is needed.

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3.2.4 The test shall screen for drugs whose use is either illegal or prone to abuse, as determined at the discretion of the DIO, Program Director or their designee, or acting supervisor with consultation as needed by the Director of the Clinical Pathology Laboratory or the State contract laboratory (if applicable).

3.2.5 The results of a Housestaff's For Cause drug test shall be communicated to the Program Director.

3.2.6 The results of the test and other circumstances may result in probation, non-renewal, or dismissal. Only the Program Director has the authority to determine these disciplinary actions once Housestaff training period has begun. Housestaff will be afforded Due Process under GME Policy HS13.0.

3.2.7 House Staff are considered "high-risk positions" and must complete pre-employment drug testing. Pre-employment drug testing failure will result in withdrawal of training offer by the DIO.

3.3 Department Chairpersons and/or Program Directors are strongly encouraged to consult the Employee-Faculty Assistance Program at Augusta University for guidance in determining possible symptoms of chemical dependence and/or substance abuse as they relate to performance impairment. The Employee-Faculty Assistance Program can also assist in the identification of appropriate treatment resources.

3.4 If applicable, written reports on treatment progress must be provided to the Program Director by the treating facility/provider. If the Housestaff is on remediation or probation during this time, applicable policies must be followed to include HS18.0.

3.5 Re-integration into the Training Program will be at the discretion of the Program Director after consultation with the Department Chairperson, the DIO, and appropriate chemical dependence professionals. Augusta University reserves the right to independently evaluate each individual to determine if that person is ready for re-integration.

3.7 Although Augusta University is committed to appropriate assistance for Housestaff with chemical dependence and/or substance abuse, untreated or relapsing dependence is judged to be incompatible with safe clinical performance. Termination such as dismissal or non-renewal through Due Process will result if a Housestaff fails to comply with a rehabilitation program or meet goals as outlined by the Program Director. Please see HS3.0 and HS13.0. House Staff may also receive adverse actions by professional licensing boards and other consequences by state and other applicable laws.

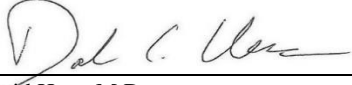
4.0 Confidentiality

4.1 When a Housestaff seeks treatment for chemical dependence/substance abuse, every effort will be made by the Institution to protect the confidentiality of such matters. Housestaff who come forward voluntarily will be given assistance consistent with state law.


5.0 Additional Reporting Responsibilities

5.1 If a Housestaff is arrested, charged, or convicted of a drug offense or DUI, they need to notify their Program and complete AU disclosure form and submit to Human Resources within 72 hours of the incident.  
<https://www.augusta.edu/hr/relations/university-employee-relations/documents/arrestdisclosureform.pdf>

5.2 The Program Director who becomes aware of substance abuse/chemical dependence with a Housestaff must take appropriate action to correct the situation. All Faculty or Staff that are aware of the chemical dependency/substance abuse problems in a Housestaff are under obligation to report this Housestaff to the appropriate Department Chairperson, Program Director, or Graduate Medical Education Office.

  
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04/28/22  
Date

  
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