

# Georgia Health Sciences University House Staff Policies and Procedures

## Policy

HS 1.0 Chemical/Substance Abuse

## Source

Graduate Medical Education Office

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### 1.0 Purpose

To provide guidelines regarding chemical/substance abuse dependence of House Officers at the Georgia Health Sciences University

### 2.0 Procedure

- 2.1 The Georgia Health Sciences University and Georgia Health Sciences Health System are committed to the medical education of the House Officer who enters treatment for chemical dependence and referral to appropriate assistance for House Officers identified as having chemical dependence and/or substance abuse problems during training.
- 2.2 Substance abuse shall mean:
- 2.2.1 The use of possession of any drug in a manner prohibited by law; and
  - 2.2.2 The use of alcohol or any legal drug or other substance in such a way that the users performance as a health care provider is impaired [Policy 1.4.32 Substance Abuse Policy](#)
- 2.3 The Department Chairperson and/or Residency Program Director will be responsible for determining whether a House Officer is suffering from untreated or relapsing chemical dependence and/or substance abuse. A House Officer suffering from active chemical dependence and/or substance abuse shall be immediately placed on leave of absence and referred for appropriate treatment. Risk Management and the Graduate Medical Education Office must be informed.
- 2.3.1 Department Chairpersons and/or Program Directors are strongly encouraged to consult the Employee/Faculty Assistance Program or other consultant in addictionology 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.
  - 2.3.2 Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of written documentation regarding a House Officer who voluntarily acknowledges him/her self for chemical dependence and/or substance abuse treatment.
- 2.4 Rehabilitation will be supervised by the Department Chairperson and/or Residency Program Director. If not directly supervising the rehabilitation, the Department Chairperson will be kept informed by the Program Director. Written reports on treatment progress must be provided to the Department Chairperson/Program Director by the treating facility/provider.
- 2.5 Re-integration into the Training Program will be at the discretion of the department Chairperson after consultation with the Program Director and appropriate chemical dependence professionals. The Georgia Health Sciences University reserves the right to independently evaluate each individual to determine if that person is ready for re-integration.
- 2.6 Although the Georgia Health Sciences University and Georgia Health Sciences Health System is committed to appropriate assistance for House Officers with chemical dependence and/or substance abuse, untreated or relapsing dependence is judged to be incompatible with safe clinical performance. Termination through due process may result if a House Officer fails to comply with a rehabilitation program or meet goals as outlined by the department Chairperson or Program Director.
- 2.7. When a House Officer voluntarily seeks treatment for chemical dependence/substance abuse, every effort will be made by the Institution to protect the confidentiality of such matters. House Officers who come forward voluntarily will be given assistance consistent with state law. House Officers who have violated laws relating to chemical/substance abuse may face prosecution, adverse actions by professional licensing boards and other negative consequences.
- 2.8 The Departmental Chairperson or Program Director who becomes aware of substance abuse/chemical dependence with a House Officer must take appropriate action to correct the situation. All faculty or hospital staff that is aware of the chemical dependency/substance abuse problem in a House Officer is under obligation to report this House Officer to the appropriate

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*The term House Officer is use as a generic term to include interns, residents and fellows in an approved ACGME Residency Training Program at Georgia Health Sciences University.*

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**Effective Date:**

7.05

**Revision/Review Date**

12/05 10/07 12/09 10/10 2/11

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HS 1.0

**Page**

1 of 2

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Departmental Chairperson, Graduate Medical Education Office and Risk Management.

2.9 Nothing in this policy shall prevent the Georgia Health Sciences University from taking disciplinary action against a House Officer, where appropriate.

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Peter Buckley, M.D.  
Dean, Medical College of Georgia

Date

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Walter J. Moore, M.D.  
Senior Associate Dean, Graduate Medical Education and VA  
Affairs

Date

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**Page**

2 of 2