

# READING HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES

## POLICY NO. 313

---

**SUBJECT: Student Substance Use/Abuse**

Responsibility of: RSHS Program Directors  
Revised: February 2020      Reviewed:

---

**SCOPE:** Students enrolled at the Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences (RSHS).

**PURPOSE:** To provide students with guidance related to the expectation that students will be free from the effects of illicit drugs, alcohol, or other mind/behavior-altering substances while engaged in all school-related activities.

To provide students the options available to assist them with a substance abuse problem; To assist students recognize the impact that a substance abuse problem may have on continued enrollment.

**POLICY:**

It is the intent of Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences to provide and maintain a safe, healthy, secure, and drug free environment. Toward that end, all individuals associated with the School are required to report to school and all school-related activities in appropriate mental and physical condition, free from the effects of illicit drugs, alcohol, or other mind/behavior-altering substances.

Alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs, and mind/behavior-altering substances are prohibited on Hospital or School property or as part of any School activity. Any infraction of this policy constitutes grounds for disciplinary action up to and including permanent termination from the school.

Students are required to report any conviction under a criminal drug statute (including DUI) for violations occurring on or off the campus while enrolled in the school. A report of a conviction must be made to the appropriate Program Director of the School within five (5) days after the conviction. Convictions of any type may prevent licensure/certification or limit opportunities for employment in healthcare.

**DEFINITIONS:** None

**PROCEDURE:**

The Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences encourages any student in need of drug and/or alcohol counseling, treatment or rehabilitation to voluntarily seek help. Access to services can be requested through the Occupational (Student) Health Department. Students may also be eligible to participate in the Reading Hospital Employee Assistance Program.

All healthcare providers have the responsibility to provide safe care and protect patients from adverse effects which may result from an impaired individual. Any school employee, who observes the performance level of a student who may be adversely affected by drug, alcohol, or substance use, is expected to report that concern to the student's Program Director.

Students are expected to refrain from activities that may indicate that the student engages in illegal or inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs. It is important to note that the expectation is to avoid even perceived conflicts with illegal or inappropriate drug or alcohol use. For example, social media posts of photographs or messages implying that the student is engaging in illegal or inappropriate drug or alcohol use may result in actions taken by the school regardless of whether the activities are real or perceived.

All actions taken in accordance with this policy will be coordinated with the appropriate Program Director of the School of Health Sciences, who is responsible for follow-up which may include interventions such as (but not limited to) contacting the appropriate school administrator, requiring the student to enroll in a monitoring program such as Pennsylvania Nurse Assistance Program (PNAP), requiring the student to seek mandatory counseling, requiring the student to take a leave of absence, requiring random drug and alcohol screening, or temporarily or permanently withdrawing the student from classes or the school. Follow-up and enrollment decisions will be heavily weighted in favor of assuring patient safety.

The School of Health Sciences acknowledges the rights of individuals to privacy in dealing with matters of substance abuse. Discussions and/or actions regarding a student's substance abuse will be treated with discretion. However, in situations where the student is involved in patient care decisions, or has access to controlled substances, the Program Director may seek guidance from other individuals to assist in making decisions regarding ongoing enrollment or the need for other actions. Program Directors may be required to notify clinical agencies regarding matters of drug or alcohol use.

Any student who is believed to be unfit for class or clinical assignment may be subject to immediate blood alcohol and urine drug screening in the Emergency Department or Occupational Health Services. Indications of unfitness for learning may include, but are not limited to, the odor of alcohol on the breath, unsteady gait, unexplained mood swings, incoherent speech, changes in mood or behavior, and inability to participate in academic activities safely and effectively (See form on page 4 for guidance). Refusal to have alcohol and drug screening may subject the student to immediate suspension with the intent to terminate enrollment. Any individual determined to be unfit for class or clinical assignment and sent for an alcohol or urine drug test will not be permitted to return to the clinical setting until the results of any test are known.

If the student fails to have a negative alcohol and/or drug screening, the following may occur:

1. The individual will be encouraged to seek treatment.
2. The individual may be required to engage in a healthcare monitoring program (example PNAP)
3. The individual may be subject to measures such as suspension, termination, or dismissal from the school. The School of Health Sciences reserves the right in each case to make the disposition in accordance with the assessment of the circumstances and/or the individual's response to treatment. Such disposition may include permanent termination

from the school. All enrollment decisions are heavily weighted toward the issue of patient safety.

If a student seeks treatment, and is later permitted to return to school, the student must provide evidence from a healthcare provider that (1) the student has been actively engaged in treatment for drug or alcohol abuse, and (2) is fit to return to patient care activities. In addition, a written condition of continued enrollment must be signed by the student. The written condition of continued enrollment will call for random blood alcohol and urine drug screening. Refusal to submit to this condition of enrollment or subsequent violation of the written condition of continued enrollment will result in discipline up to and including permanent termination from the school.

If conditions warrant, referral to proper authorities for prosecution may occur. All students are subject to legal penalties for the unlawful possession or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol.

All students are hereby advised of the following:

In Pennsylvania, the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, 35 P.S. 780-101 - 780-960.7 prohibits, *inter alia*, the manufacture, sale or delivery, holding, offering for sale or possession of any controlled substance or other drug, device or cosmetic that is adulterated or misbranded. Violations of the Controlled Substance Drug, Device and Cosmetics Act are punishable by imprisonment, fine, or both.

The Federal Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S. Code 841 *et seq.* prohibits the knowing or intentional manufacture, distribution, dispensing, or possession with intent to manufacture, distribute, or dispense a controlled or counterfeit substance, violations of which also are punishable by imprisonment, fine, or both.

### **MEDICAL MARIJUANA:**

Medical marijuana is a federally illegal drug which, in accordance with Reading Hospital Policy, falls under the HR Substance Policy. Reading Hospital has a zero tolerance for such substances. When students are engaged in a clinical course, the inability to participate in the clinical environment results in the student's failure to meet course requirements, and thus results in termination from the program.

A positive finding of THC, or any other evidence of marijuana, may result in immediate suspension from participating in clinical activities, and termination from the RHSHS educational program. The source of THC and whether the drug has been prescribed or not prescribed has no bearing on the outcome. A positive finding is a positive finding (regardless of the source or prescription status), and will result in termination from the educational program regardless of whether the student is currently enrolled in a clinical course.

If the student is also a Tower Health employee, that individual may also be terminated from employment at RH or Tower Health.

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING:** Students are provided a drug and alcohol program as part of orientation.

**REFERENCES:** See Form on following page

**COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL APPROVALS:** RHSHS Directors Meeting, February 2020

**CANCELLATION:** Reading Hospital or Tower Health policies directly related to this topic shall supersede this RHSHS policy. This policy supersedes all previous policies, memoranda, and/or other communications pertaining to this policy.

READING HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES  
OBSERVATIONS RECORDING FORM  
POSSIBLE SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Check all areas that are identified as concerns:

**Appearance**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigued appearance | <input type="checkbox"/> Sloppy dress          | <input type="checkbox"/> Odor-alcohol, marijuana           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red, swollen eyes   | <input type="checkbox"/> Slurring of speech    | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical signs of violence/injury |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staggering gait     | <input type="checkbox"/> Impaired coordination | <input type="checkbox"/> Hangover-like symptoms            |

**Absenteeism/Health problems**

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unexpected absences | <input type="checkbox"/> Tardiness |
|--|------------------------------------|

**Troubling Patterns of Behavior**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Constant sniffing  | <input type="checkbox"/> Constant coughing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extending break times  | <input type="checkbox"/> Missed deadlines  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improbable excuses for tardiness, absences, and/or mistakes    | <input type="checkbox"/> Mistakes due to inattention, bad judgment, confusion, and/or negligence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Damage to Hospital property, accidents/incidents on off campus | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent conversation about alcohol/drugs                               |

**Changes in Performance**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty in concentration; tasks take more time              | <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased performance in particular task       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty in recalling instructions, details, and/or mistakes | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate periods of high and low productivity |

**Attitude Problems**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paranoid, suspicious behavior; resentment   | <input type="checkbox"/> Extreme mood shifts; wide swings in morale                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frustration and/or anxiety  | <input type="checkbox"/> Avoidance and/or isolation   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Explosive behavior; rude or belligerent   | <input type="checkbox"/> Concerns or complaints expressed by constituents, managers, patients |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family and/or legal problems that results in absence or inability to complete assignments | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:   |

Please include additional observations not included in list above: \_\_\_\_\_

---



---



---



---

Signature of RSHS Faculty Member \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Program Director \_\_\_\_\_