



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: The Professional Practice Committee

FROM: Douglas E. Lentivech

SUBJECT: The Role of the Professional Assistance Program in Assisting Licensed Professionals with Alcohol and Substance Abuse Problems

DATE: June 10, 2013

AUTHORIZATION(S):

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

At its meeting in April 2013, the members of the Professional Practice Committee asked for a discussion of issues faced by health care professionals who themselves have problems with alcohol or substance abuse.

Reason(s) for Consideration

For information.

Proposed Handling

This issue will come before the Professional Practice Committee for discussion at its June meeting. A brief presentation of program history, processes, progress to date, and future opportunities will be followed by discussion.

Procedural History

Section 6510-b of the Education Law and Part 18 of the Rules of the Board of Regents established the Professional Assistance Program (PAP) and the Committee for Professional Assistance to advise the Board of Regents on matters relating to practice by professional licensees with drug or alcohol abuse problems. This report is an update on the work of the PAP and the Committee on Professional Assistance. Previous updates were provided in March 2000, January 2002, and July 2007.

Background Information

Each month the Professional Practice Committee and the Board of Regents act on disciplinary cases against licensed professionals. Many of these cases involve, either directly or indirectly, the misuse of alcohol or drugs by licensees. While alcohol and substance abuse are problems throughout society, they may present particular concerns when they afflict professional licensees who are often responsible for the health and safety of others.

The PAP works to protect the public while preserving the ability of valuable licensed professionals to continue in their professions by assisting them to receive treatment for alcohol or substance abuse. It does this by providing an opportunity for licensed professionals to immediately and confidentially surrender their licenses while in treatment and by strict monitoring of their professional practice for at least two years after licensees return to practice.

This presentation to the Professional Practice Committee will provide an overview of the work of the PAP, including relevant statistics.