



**TO:** The Professional Practice Committee  
**FROM:** Sarah S. Benson *Sarah S. Benson*  
**SUBJECT:** The Role of the Professional Assistance Program in Assisting Licensed Professionals with Alcohol and Substance Abuse Problems

**DATE:** November 5, 2020

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

#### **SUMMARY**

#### **Issue for Discussion**

This report is to update the Board of Regents on the continued success of the Professional Assistance Program (PAP).

#### **Reason for Consideration**

Information will be presented to the Board of Regents about how the PAP protects the public and preserves professionals.

#### **Proposed Handling**

This issue will come before the Professional Practice Committee for discussion at the November 2020 meeting of the Board of Regents. 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 PAP and the Committee for Professional Assistance to advise the Board of Regents on matters relating to practice by professional licensees with drug and/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, July 2007, June 2013 and September 2019.

## **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 and/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 respective professions by assisting them to receive treatment for alcohol and/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 they return to practice.

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

## **Related Regents Items**

Not applicable.

## **Recommendation**

Not applicable.

## **Timetable for Implementation**

Not applicable.