


**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
NURSING CARE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMISSION  
PROCEDURE**

<b>Title:</b>	Unauthorized Substance Use	<b>Number:</b>	W44.02
<b>Reference:</b>	<a href="#">RCW 18.130.160</a> <a href="#">RCW 18.130.175</a> <a href="#">WAC 246-840-750</a> through <a href="#">246-840-780</a>		
<b>Contact:</b>	Paula R. Meyer, MSN, RN, FRE Executive Director Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission		
<b>Effective Date:</b>	January 10, 2020	<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	January 2020
<b>Supersedes:</b>	W11.01 W44.01		
<b>Approved:</b>	 Tracy Rude, LPN Chair Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission		

**PURPOSE:**

For public protection and the purposes of monitoring, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing *Substance Use Disorder in Nursing* (2011) defines relapse as “any unauthorized use or abuse of alcohol, medications or mind-altering substances. Patient safety is jeopardized if a relapse is not identified early. Consistent monitoring and immediate identification of relapse is critical as it puts the nurse’s health in immediate jeopardy and may be fatal.” (Page 216)

**PROCEDURE:**

- I. The nurse will:
  - A. Immediately report all unauthorized substance use to Washington Health Professional Services (WHPS), and if applicable, the Worksite Monitor (WSM) and Peer Support Group (PSG).
  - B. Immediately cease practice.
  - C. Complete an observed drug test as scheduled and requested by WHPS.
  - D. Schedule a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) evaluation according to *Procedure W34 Substance Use Evaluation and Treatment Services*. The nurse must schedule the SUD evaluation within two days.
  - E. Begin recommended level of treatment as soon as possible.
  - F. Not return to practice until the treatment counselor and WHPS determine the nurse is safe to practice.

- II. WHPS will:
  - A. Verify practice cessation with the WSM.
  - B. Review all instances of unauthorized substance use at the next scheduled case staffing meeting or sooner.
  - C. Assess each case individually according to relapse behavior. WHPS will consider:
    - 1. Use after a period of abstinence.
    - 2. Return to prior use pattern.
    - 3. Little or no program contact.
    - 4. Program participation type.
    - 5. Use within the context of active practice.
    - 6. Contract compliance history.
    - 7. Current SUD evaluation.
  - D. Refer any unauthorized substance use that occurs after the first 90 days of program participation to the Substance Use and Abuse Team (SUAT) within 30 days of receiving the confirmatory test results. (*Refer to Procedure A20. Substance Abuse Orders.*) WHPS may not consider unauthorized substance use during the first 90 days as relapse due to a lack of period of abstinence or significant recovery time. The report to SUAT will include the following information and documentation:
    - 1. Evaluation summary with diagnosis and treatment recommendations from the nurse's healthcare provider.
    - 2. Positive drug or alcohol screen, including positive tests reported from sources outside WHPS, with Medical Review Officer (MRO) review if applicable.
    - 3. Complete significant non-compliance history.
    - 4. Synopsis of program history, referred to as the Trek Story in the Recovery Trek monitoring system.
    - 5. Current monitoring contract.
    - 6. Incident report.
  - E. Notify SUAT of any delay in submitting necessary documentation.
  - F. In the interest of public safety, cases that involve, but are not limited to, workplace diversion, patient harm, or illegal activity (e.g., medication resale) may necessitate restarting contract lengths and terms.

III. Amended Program Participation Contracts (*See Procedure W35 Terms and Conditions of Contract Compliance.*)

- A. When an SUD evaluation results in an elevated diagnosis, WHPS will adjust contract terms and conditions accordingly.
- B. The nurse has ten working days to return the amended contract. If the nurse fails to return the contract or chooses not to accept the contract, WHPS will refer the nurse to NCQAC and may discharge the nurse from the program.