

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF NURSING
PROCEDURE**

Title: Short-Term Analgesic Use

Number: W41.02

Reference: [RCW 18.130.160](#) - Finding of unprofessional conduct—Orders—Sanctions—Stay—Costs—Stipulations.
[RCW 18.130.175](#) - Physician health and voluntary substance use disorder monitoring programs (*as amended by 2023 c 425*).
[WAC 246-840-750](#) - Philosophy governing voluntary substance use monitoring programs.
[WAC 246-840-760](#) - Definitions of terms used in [WAC 246-840-750](#) through [246-840-790](#).
[WAC 246-840-770](#) - Approval of substance use monitoring programs
[WAC 246-840-780](#) - Conditions for participants entering the approved substance use monitoring program.
[WAC 246-840-790](#) - Substance use disorder monitoring stipend program

Contact: Catherine Woodard
Director, Discipline and Washington Health Professional Services
Washington State Board of Nursing (WABON)

Effective Date: January 10, 2025

Date for Review: January 10, 2027

Supersedes: W41.01
W10.01

Approved: 

Dawn Morrell, BSN, RN
Chair
Washington State Board of Nursing (WABON)

PURPOSE:

To support appropriate pain management for nurses with short-term needs for narcotic analgesics. Acute pain may occur in those with substance use disorders because of trauma, surgery, etc. Therefore, Washington Health Professional Services (WHPS) supports appropriate pain management for nurses.

PROCEDURE:

- I. Nurse Responsibility to Report
 - A. The nurse will notify WHPS and their work site monitor (WSM) immediately if a healthcare provider has or will be prescribing narcotic analgesic medication.
 - B. The prescriber must fax a completed Prescription Information Form to WHPS.
 - C. The nurse will immediately cease practice.

- II. WHPS Responsibilities
 - A. Review the Prescription Information Form, including the reason for the medication prescription, frequency and dose, specific date and time of anticipated last dose, and prescriber's name and contact information.
 - B. Direct the nurse to call WHPS to report when they have taken their last prescribed dose. Verify with the nurse that they have taken all doses and no medication remains. If any medication remains, WHPS will direct the nurse to return the medication to the prescriber or appropriate take-back location.
 - C. Contact the WSM to confirm that the nurse is not practicing direct patient care while taking the medication. Inform the WSM that the nurse may resume direct patient care practice 24 hours after taking the last dose, if the employer and WHPS approve their return to work.
 - D. Schedule a drug test (standard panel + EtG) at least 72 hours after last dose. Most analgesics take at least 72 hours to clear from the body. WHPS may adjust the testing window depending on the medication.
 - E. Remind the WSM to be vigilant for any signs of impairment.