



Compassion, Accountability, Recovery,
Empowerment & Safety (CARES)

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

All measured results were derived from data collected between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025.



01.

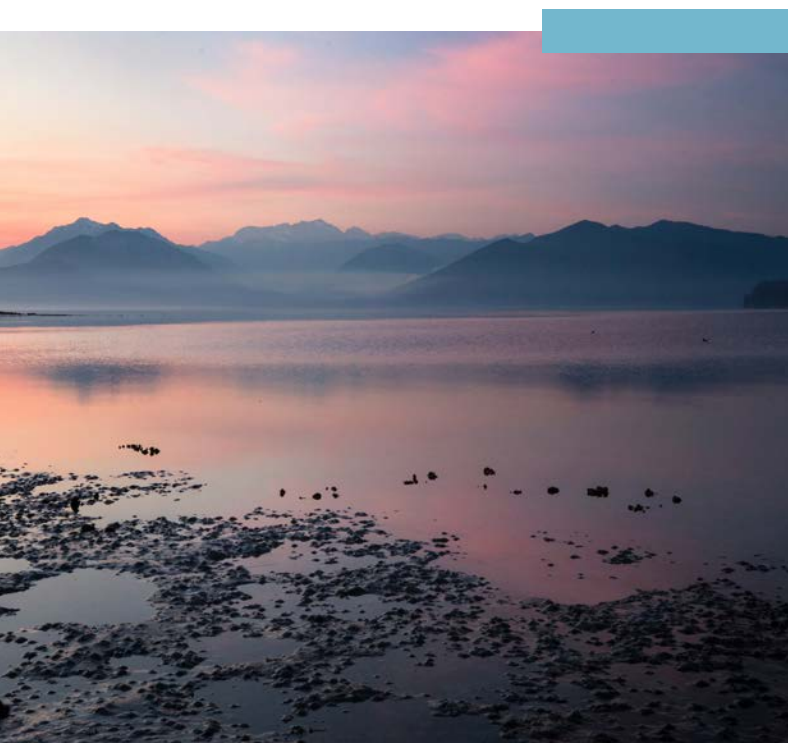
Program direction to assure decisions are congruent with current research, knowledge, best practices and compliance with legislative and WABON directives.

Program Direction Assures Decisions are Congruent with Current Research, Knowledge, Best Practices & Compliance with Legislative & WABON Directives

CARES, in conjunction with the Substance Use Disorder Review Panel (SUDRP), is committed to providing a monitoring program that enables nurses facing the challenge of substance use disorder (SUD) to continue to practice, while ensuring the safety of the public. CARES follows the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) best practices related to SUD monitoring, including drug testing, attendance at mutual support groups, regular check-ins, and worksite monitoring. CARES staff regularly receive notices from RecoveryTrek and the United States Drug Testing Laboratories (USDTL) with information on updated SUD treatment processes, monitoring, testing, medications, and a variety of other topics.

02.

Annual Procedure Review Results now on a every fours year schedule.



03.

Confirmation that required documents can be tracked and verified.

Tracking and Verification of Required Documents

The Director of CARES and CARES Operations Manager are tasked with consistently reviewing random case files on a monthly basis. This ensures file completeness and verifies receipt of required documentation from participants, peer support group facilitators, worksite monitors, and other individuals involved in the participant's recovery. There are variety of documents required of participants, including contracts, release of information forms, consistently updated prescription information, and treatment evaluations, as well as reports related to employment, group participation, and attendance

In addition to ensuring the requirements placed on the participant are met, the case managers are responsible for responding to nonadherence issues in a timely manner and in adherence with CARES procedures. Monthly reports provide statistical data that ensures this is being done consistently.

04.

Legal or Financial Components as Directed by WABON

CARES receives funding through licensing fees and does not have a dedicated budget outside of that funding source. CARES typically employs a part-time medical director, and also manages a no-cost contract with RecoveryTrek, a third-party administrator that supports SUD monitoring and compliance through a comprehensive data management system.

The Stipend Program is funded on a fiscal basis, from July 1 - June 30. The funding from the 2024-2025 fiscal year provided support for participants through the first 6 months of 2025.

During that time, the fund supported 29 participants, and the full allotment was expended.

In July 2025, the program was funded with an additional \$25,000, and received an influx of applications. This led to the full \$25,000 allotment being expended by December.

The funding provided support for 50 approved participants during the last 6 months of 2025.

05.

Number and Types of Referrals

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
APUC	2	8	3	3	5	6	11
ORDER	20	26	20	10	14	12	14
PENDING	18	16	6	5	15	16	13
REFERRAL	19	9	25	16	20	12	17
STID	7	13	14	6	7	3	5
VOLUNTARY	9	14	8	11	7	9	9
OOS (part of the #s above)							3

06.

Length of time to determine eligibility for participation.

DETERMINED IN AVERAGE DAYS

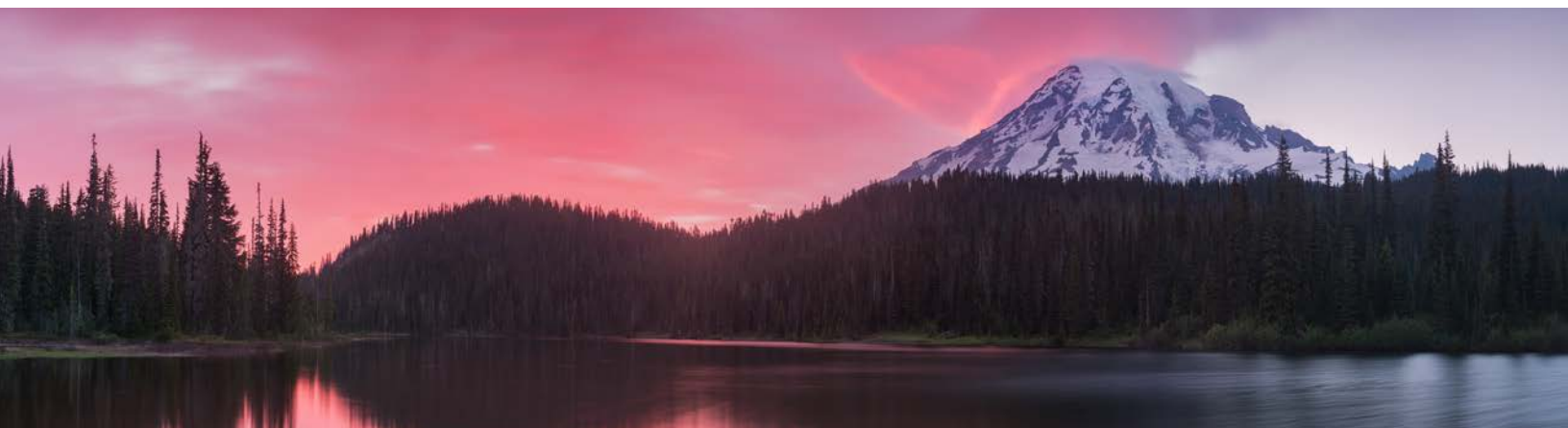
2019	57
2020	46
2021	42
2022	47
2023	39
2024	35
2025	45

07.

Length of time from when the program receives the referral to the execution of the agreement.

DETERMINED IN AVERAGE DAYS

2019	49
2020	37
2021	48
2022	37
2023	36
2024	43
2025	53



08.

Return to work rates for CARES nurses working under their current credentials.

	Employed	Not Employed
2019	80	20
2020	79	21
2021	78	22
2022	77	23
2023	79	21
2024	82	18
2025	77	23

The main focus of CARES is to ensure the safety of the public, and that is achieved by monitoring nurses while they are working with patients.

Over the past 7 years, an average of 78% of nurses enrolled in CARES have been able to return to work under their credential while in the program.

In 2025 specifically, the percentage of nurses enrolled in CARES and working under their credential was 77%.

09.

Number of nurses removed from practice and reasons for removal.

Reasons for removal from practice include, but are not limited to:

- Positive Drug Tests
- Unauthorized use of prescription or over-the-counter medications
- Employment noncompliance
- Excessive missed tests
- Admitted relapse

	2024	2025
Incidents of noncompliance resulting with a nurse being removed from practice.	37	44
Nurses removed from practice in 2024	26	28
Nurses removed more than once	5	10
Nurses removed more than twice	2	5
Nurses terminated from employment upon being removed from practice	2	3
Incidents took place within a nurses' first 90 days of enrollment in CARES	4	1

10.

Recidivism rates for completers.

	Returning to CARES after successfully completing program	New Contracts offered/Signed
2025	6	79
2024	10	58
2023	6	68
2022	6	73
2021	4	76
2020	4	74
2019	6	75

11.

Responses of case managers to non-compliance and relapse issues.

CARES Case Managers are committed to a consistent approach to monitoring participants. This is especially important when dealing with situations that result in a noncompliance incident.

Monthly reports provide assurance that responses to these incidents occur in a timely manner. It is imperative that procedures are followed appropriately, communication is documented, and all relevant documentation is maintained in a secure manner.

12.

Annual summary of the Substance Use and Disorder Review Panel (SUDRP) actions.

It is important to note that not all incidents are reviewed by SUDRP; only issues of significant noncompliance are brought to the panel. In addition, when a participant is struggling with their recovery, there may be more than one issue presenting at the time of the incident. For example, the participant may have missed a check-in, then missed a test, and then have a positive drug screen. All three of these incidents would be reviewed as one case.

This is why the SUDRP cases reviewed number may not equal the incident numbers for each month

In 2025 SUDRP reviewed a total of 92 issues of noncompliance, presented in 92 cases, for an average of 7.7 per month. The goal is to not have to review any cases at all.

The yearly numbers are show below.

There were no instances of Treatment or Attendance noncompliance during the 2025 calendar year

Cases reviewed	2024	2025
Employment	3	5
Positive Drug Screen	63	55
Other	8	25
Missed Test/Check in	17	4
Relapse	15	4
TOTAL	64	92

13.

Education Outreach Plans & Reports

Case managers continue to reach out regularly to healthcare facilities, nursing students, human resource staff, nurse and facility managers, and healthcare executives. Outreach is done mainly via virtual means.

Presentations are available to anyone who reaches out; an online request form was developed and requests are received regularly.

14.

External audit findings of performance.

A student cohort from the University of Washington provided support to enhance the CARES handbook and destigmatize the language used. From that work, a 1-pager was produced to be distributed to nurses, providing insight into the program and specifically into the recovery process.

With input from current participants and robust discussions, the program was rebranded from Washington Health Professional Services to CARES.

Work began in 2025 to transition CARES to the Practice Unit within WABON.

15.

Policy recommendations to WABON.

The funding resource for the stipend program administered by CARES was allotted \$25,000 from the general fund to support nurses struggling with the financial burden of participation in CARES.

The program expended the full amount of the allotment between July and December, leaving participants without support for the first half of 2026.

