

# Evaluation and Treatment of Impaired Professionals

## Overview

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Overcoming a substance use disorder is difficult for anyone. However, there is an added layer of complexity when the person is a trusted professional. There is compounding distress over the possibility of losing one's license and livelihood.

## Who are professionals?

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In this context, lawyers, nurses, pharmacists, physicians, dentists and airline pilots are primarily regarded as "professionals."

## What are the different types of Impaired Professionals Programs?

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### 1. Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of Pennsylvania, Inc. (LCL-PA)

- **MISSION:** To help restore the health and professional competency of Pennsylvania's judges, lawyers and law students who are at risk as a result of substance use and co-occurring disorders.
- **SERVICES:** A combination of confidential helpline services, volunteer support and education. Also, LCL's affiliation with the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania allows lawyers who are continuing treatment for substance use disorders to receive special consideration.
- **OUTCOMES/STATISTICS:** 1 in 5 lawyers will develop a substance use and/or co-occurring disorder. Even with the LCL program, the chances of relapse are 40% to 60%.

### 2. Pennsylvania Nurse Peer Assistance Program (PNAP)

- **MISSION:** To identify, support and advocate on behalf of the Nurse or Nursing Student who is facing challenges associated with a substance use and/or co-occurring disorder.
- **SERVICES:** • **Intervention**, • **Assessment**, • **Monitoring** (lasts **3** years and consists of Drug Screenings, Treatment, 12-Step Meetings and Nurse Meetings), • **Referrals** (to attorneys) and • **Representation** (provided by PNAP at hearings).
- **OUTCOMES/STATISTICS:** Since May 2009, PNAP has assisted over 5,000 licensed nurses in PA. Through PNAP's monitoring program, nurses demonstrate a 91% full compliance rate.

### 3. Secundum Artem Reaching Pharmacists with Help (S.A.R.P.H.)

- **MISSION:** PA's Pharmacist Peer Assistance Program strives to help pharmacists deal with substance use disorders.
- **SERVICES:** Intervention, treatment and monitoring (lasts **3** years and consists of drug tests/peer mentor assessments).
- **OUTCOMES/STATISTICS:** Since its inception in 1984 through December 2014, over 4200 participants have enrolled in the program, and 93 % of participants have successfully completed it.

### 4. Pennsylvania's Physicians' Health Programs (PHP) - Programs for Physicians and Dentists

- **MISSION:** The early identification and rehabilitation of physicians, dentists and other eligible health care professionals, with concerns relating to substance use and mental health disorders.
- **SERVICES:** Providing assessment, treatment, monitoring and advocacy with the goal of safely returning participants to the practice of their profession.
- **OUTCOMES/STATISTICS:** As of April 2017, PHPs report five-year abstinence rates for substance use disorders of 88%, return to work rates of 96%, and little or no evidence of serious risk or harm to patients.

### 5. Human Intervention Motivation Study (HIMS) - Occupational Substance Abuse Program for Pilots

- **MISSION:** To treat SUDs in pilot populations, in order to save lives and careers, while enhancing flight safety.
- **SERVICES:** Managers/peer pilots intervene to direct those in need to SUD professionals. If necessary, treatment is initiated. Upon completion, pilots can seek medical re-certification. However, further evaluation by an Aviation Medical Examiner (AME) who acts as the Independent Medical Sponsor (IMS) is required. Continuing care includes monthly evaluations over the course of several years.
- **OUTCOMES/STATISTICS:** The three year success rate is approximately 95% with an estimated lifetime abstinence rate of 88% to 90%.