

VA Drug-Free Workplace Program

Guide for Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Health Professions Trainees (HPTs)

In 1986, President Reagan signed Executive Order 12564, Drug-Free Federal Workplace, setting a goal to prevent Federal employee use of illegal drugs, whether on or off duty. In accordance with the Executive Order, VA established a Drug-Free Workplace Program, and aims to create an environment that is safe, healthful, productive and secure.

As you should already know:

- **All** VHA HPTs are exempt from pre-employment drug-testing.
- **Most** VHA HPTs are in testing designated positions (TDPs) and subject to random drug testing.
- **All** VA employees appointed to a TDP (including HPTs) must sign a *Random Drug Testing Notification and Acknowledgement Memo*. The list of exempt positions (NOT TDP) is on the memo (see link below).
- **All** HPTs in TDPs are subject to the following types of drug testing:
 - Random;
 - Reasonable suspicion;
 - Injury, illness, unsafe or unhealthful practice; and
 - Follow-up after completion of a counseling or rehabilitation program for illegal drug use through the VA Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Here are a few additional points:

- VHA HPTs may receive counseling and rehabilitation assistance through the VA EAP. *Contact the local VHA HR office for more information about EAP.*
- VHA HPTs will be given the opportunity to justify a positive test result by submitting supplemental medical documentation to a Medical Review Officer (MRO) when a confirmed positive test could have resulted from legally prescribed medication.
- Prior to being notified of a drug test, VHA HPTs may avoid disciplinary action by voluntarily identifying themselves to EAP as a user of illegal drugs. Disciplinary action will not be initiated if the HPT fully complies with counseling, rehabilitation and after-care recommended by EAP, and thereafter refrains from using illegal drugs.

Note: Self-identification must happen prior to being notified of a drug test. This option is no longer viable once an HPT has been selected for a drug test.

However, be aware that VA will initiate **termination** of VA appointment and/or dismissal from VA rotation against any trainee who:

- Is found to use illegal drugs on the basis of a verified positive drug test (even if a drug is legal in the state where training); or
- Refuses to be drug tested.

We encourage you to share this information with all current and prospective HPTs, so expectations and due process procedures are understood.

Additional Information and Resources:

- Drug Free Workplace Program (DFWP) Helpline 1-800-967-5752
- VA, OAA Health Professions Trainee Application Forms webpage and *Random Drug Testing Notification and Acknowledgement Memo*: <https://www.va.gov/oa/app-forms.asp>
- VA Publications: <https://www.va.gov/vapubs/>
 - VA Handbook 5021, Employee-Management Relations
 - VA Handbook 5383, Drug-Free Workplace Program