

**Kennesaw State University  
Wellstar College of Health & Human Services  
Wellstar School of Nursing**

**Substance Misuse and Substance Use Disorders  
in Nursing Students Policy/Procedures**

The Kennesaw State University Wellstar College of Health & Human Services Wellstar School of Nursing requires a drug screen and background check after admission and periodically throughout the program to comply with clinical facility requirements. In addition, the WSON or agencies may require random drug screens, on the spot drug screens if there is a suspicion of drug use, or routine drug screens if follow up is needed. Students enrolled in our programs must comply with agency requests in order to attend clinical and remain in the nursing program.

**Policy Statement**

The faculty of the Wellstar School of Nursing (WSON) believes they have an ethical and professional responsibility to provide a safe and effective educational environment to students and to patients who receive nursing care from students. Students are expected to participate in WSON and SNA sponsored learning activities and functions free of chemical impairment. The WSON faculty is committed to assisting students with recovery from substance use disorder. In developing the policy and procedures for intervening with a student who displays symptoms of substance use disorder, the faculty has adopted the following basic assumptions of the *American Association of Colleges of Nursing Policy and Guidelines for Prevention and Management of Substance Abuse in the Nursing Education Community* (1998):

Substance abuse compromises both the education process and patient safety and must be addressed by schools of nursing. Academic units in nursing have a commitment to and a unique role in the identification of abuse, intervention, referral for treatment, and monitoring of recovering individuals; addicted individuals need to recognize the consequences of their substance abuse. Addiction is a treatable illness, and rehabilitative and therapeutic approaches are effective in facilitating recovery; individuals with addictive illnesses should receive an opportunity for treatment in lieu of, or before disciplinary action (p.2).

*\*For this document, the terms substance abuse and addiction have been updated to the currently accepted terms substance misuse and Substance Use Disorder.*

**Definitions**

- The WSON faculty define the impaired student as a person who, while in the academic or clinical setting, is under the influence of, or has misused, either separately or in combination, mind-altering substances including alcohol, over-the-counter medications, prescribed medications, illegal drugs, inhalants or synthetic designer drugs.
- A student known to be impaired from substance misuse places a legal and ethical burden on WSON faculty and administration. Legal ramifications of an impaired nursing student are injury to patients and potential malpractice, implicating the student, faculty, clinical agency, and educational institution.

- WSON faculty has a responsibility to intervene when patient safety and clinical performance are compromised by a student who is misusing substances. When substance misuse is suspected, the *WSON Substance Misuse and Substance Use Disorders in Nursing Students Policy/Procedures* will be implemented.

### **Prevention and Education**

Education is a crucial component in the prevention of substance use disorder and substance misuse. WSON students, faculty, and staff are provided information about substance misuse, along with the consequences of impairment due to substance use disorder. During the WSON orientation process, *WSON Substance Misuse and Substance Use Disorders in Nursing Students Policy/Procedures* is disseminated, reviewed, and signed, along with information on services and programming offered by Kennesaw State University (KSU), including the Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery and Kennesaw State University Student Health Services.

### **Procedure for Drug Testing**

All WSON students are required to complete a drug test prior to starting classes to comply with clinical agency credentialing. Students are also subject to random drug testing during the program and are required to comply with a drug test if suspicion of impairment exists. Drug testing is conducted by the WSON identified laboratory. Cost associated with testing is the responsibility of the student. Students grant access to drug testing results to the WSON and the clinical agencies requiring the testing. The Associate Director of the Undergraduate or Graduate Program of concern will review any positive drug screening results. The WSON ensures confidentiality of results by making the information available only to the student and appropriate WSON Administrators, Staff, and Faculty. If a student has a positive drug test, they will be required to withdraw from clinical courses immediately (see appendix J) and the intervention phases of this policy will be implemented.

### **Procedures for Faculty Intervention with a Student suspected of Substance Misuse or Substance Use Disorder**

The WSON Faculty follows the University's policy prohibiting the illegal possession, use, or distribution of drugs and/or alcohol by students on University property or as part of any University affiliated academic activity, including off-campus learning activities, such as clinical. Violators will be prosecuted in accordance with applicable laws and ordinances and will be subject to disciplinary action by the University in conformance with University policy (See KSU Student Handbook regarding Student Code of Conduct—Use and Possession of Drugs, Including Alcohol).

1. Indicators suggesting impairment of a student's ability to meet standards of performance, competency, and safety are observed and documented by faculty.
2. Identification should be based on patterns of observable objective and quantifiable behaviors or indicators (See Appendix E, i.e., Slurred or rapid speech, odor of alcohol, unsteady/staggering gait, mood swings, forgetfulness, sleeping). If suspected, the student must submit to immediate drug testing. Refusal of a student to submit to testing may

result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the nursing program in accordance with the WSON policy.

3. Faculty who suspect student impairment are to notify the WSON Associate Director of Graduate or Undergraduate Programs of their concern.
4. If the student demonstrates impaired behaviors that compromise patient safety and/or academic performance, remove the student to a private area. With a neutral party present, discuss observed behaviors with the student and allow the student to provide a verbal explanation.

If faculty observe symptoms or other indicators of impairment in a student, the student is informed of the faculty's responsibility to dismiss a student from the immediate area who is physically or mentally unable to meet the standards of performance, competency, and safety. The student is to be relieved of further clinical/laboratory/classroom responsibilities for the day. Inform the student that a violation of the *KSU WSON Substance Use Disorders in Nursing Students Policy/Procedures* is suspected. With the assistance of faculty or staff, the student will arrange safe transportation home or to the nearest approved drug testing facility for immediate testing. Faculty will document how the student left. The student will have eight hours to complete the drug test. Failure to do so can result in immediate dismissal from the nursing program.

## **Intervention**

### **Phase I**

- Faculty completes a reporting form of the alleged impaired student nurse with observed behaviors indicative of Substance Misuse or Substance Use Disorder (see Appendix F).
- Faculty informs student of observations indicative of chemical impairment. Student must submit to drug testing within eight hours of the reported behaviors. The test is conducted by a WSON approved laboratory using established methods and procedures.
- The student is to be relieved of further clinical/laboratory/classroom responsibilities until a comprehensive professional evaluation can be completed.
- The student and WSON Director are provided with a copy of this reporting form. The student is informed that a copy of this report will be placed into the student's file.
- WSON Director informs all other appropriate faculty members involved with the student during the semester on a "need to know" basis.
- WSON Director reviews the procedural requirements of the *KSU WSON Substance Use Disorders in Nursing Students Policy/Procedures*. Refusal of a student to submit to immediate testing or to any other requirement of this Substance Use Disorders in Nursing Students Policy/Procedures may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the nursing program in accordance with the WSON policy.

### **Phase II**

Within five working days of the filing of a report of alleged Substance Misuse or Substance Use Disorder, a conference is scheduled with the student, involved faculty member, committee member of Undergraduate Advisory Committee on Student Behavior, and WSON Director. In addition, a Counselor from The Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery at KSU will

act as a neutral party, but not enforce nursing policies. The WSON Director will take the lead in conducting the conference.

- Purposes of conference are to:
  - convey concern for the student as caregiver as well as concern for the patients.
  - explain how the behavior interferes with the student's performance in the course.
  - explain academic consequences resulting from the student's chemical impairment identification.
  - secure student agreement to a comprehensive evaluation for the purpose of professional assessment of substance use disorder status and the determination of a treatment plan.
- A written contract for the impaired nursing student (see Appendix G) is reviewed and the student is requested to agree to the terms set forth. WSON Director asks the student to sign the contract and the *Agreement for Monitoring the student with Substance Misuse or Substance Use Disorder* (see Appendix H) confirming that the student understands the terms of the contract and academic consequences. If the student refuses to sign the contract, the student may be administratively dismissed from the nursing program in accordance with the WSON policy. (See Policy on Unsafe Practice in KSU WSON Student Handbook).
- WSON Director provides student with a list of state licensed agencies that provide evaluation services along with services provided on campus by the Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery. (See Appendix B). WSON Director also reviews with student that he/she is responsible for the cost of the evaluation and any prescribed treatment.

#### **Other issues to consider when obtaining treatment:**

- Realize the potential of suicidal risk upon intervention/confrontation of an issue of concern, and the time lapse to have an evaluation.
- There are options on campus at KSU for the student to obtain evaluation, counseling and treatment services: The Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery, the KSU Health Clinic and Counseling and Psychological Services.
- Have student check insurance plan to see what providers are in network.
- Utilize county mental health facilities if the student does not want to use free services available on campus and insurance or finances are an issue.
- Many treatment centers will do a free initial triage to evaluate for any risk of self-harm, and will provide resources for students.

#### **Evaluation**

Upon completion of a comprehensive professional evaluation of substance use disorder status, one of four courses of action may be taken by the WSON with the student:

- **Non-validation of the Violation of the *KSU WSON Substance Use Disorders in Nursing Students Policy/Procedures*** (i.e., the comprehensive evaluation does not support/substantiate the alleged report of student behaviors indicative of substance misuse or Substance Use Disorder). In the event of a non-validation of violation, all documentation is removed from the student's file. Upon receipt of a negative drug test and written recommendations from the evaluator that there is no evidence of substance misuse,

the student may return to all courses in progress with no academic penalty related to chemical impairment.

- **Validation of the Violation Without Implementation of the *KSU WSON Substance Use Disorders in Nursing Students Policy/Procedures*** (i.e., the comprehensive evaluation supports/substantiates the alleged report of student behaviors indicative of substance misuse or Substance Use Disorder and the student refuses to follow the policy regarding treatment and monitoring). If the student refuses to sign the contracts for monitoring and return to the nursing program (See Appendices F & G), then the student may be administratively dismissed from the nursing program by the WSON Director. WSON Director will point out that it is in the student's interest to accept the outlined treatment and monitoring for substance use disorder.
- **Validation of the Violation With Implementation of the *KSU WSON Substance Use Disorders in Nursing Students Policy/Procedures*** (i.e., the comprehensive evaluation supports/substantiates the alleged report of student behaviors indicative of chemical impairment, and the student agrees to follow the policy regarding treatment and monitoring). Student signs the contracts for monitoring, returns to the nursing program (See Appendices H & I), and is allowed to continue in the nursing program if the student is in compliance with his/her substance use disorder treatment program and remains free of substance misuse behaviors and substances for the duration of their participation in the nursing program.
- **Mixed or Inconclusive Results of the Substance Misuse Evaluation.** The student is given the option to seek another mental health assessment. The monitoring and treatment agreement will then depend on the outcome of the second evaluation. If the student requires professional treatment, the student will sign a written plan of action for correcting the behavior, with a realistic time frame for meeting the recommendations of the action plan. The student is allowed to continue in the nursing program if the student remains in compliance with the negotiated action plan.

### Academic Outcome

- The academic consequences required with the implementation of the *KSU WSON Substance Use Disorders in Nursing Students Policy/Procedures* is contingent upon the completion of the substance evaluation or follow up mental health assessment, and agreement of the treatment/action plan if indicated. A semester grade of "W" (Withdrawal), "I" (Incomplete), or "F" (Failure) is assigned to courses dependent upon factors related to grade determination as outlined in the KSU Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs. If no treatment for substance use disorder or mental illness is required, the student may return to all courses in progress upon receipt of the written recommendation from the professional evaluator. If appropriate the identified student nurse may seek a medical withdrawal while seeking treatment and care for a Substance Use Disorder.

### Other

- All students must be aware that the state examining board has the right to refuse to grant a registered nurse license to any individual regardless of educational credentials under circumstances of (1) falsification of application for licensure; and/or (2) conviction of a felony or crime of moral turpitude; other moral and legal violations specified in the Georgia law.

### **Re-entry to WSON**

- Upon successful completion of a treatment program as outlined according to the written plan by the evaluator or mental health counselor, the student can apply for re-entry to the nursing program for the semester the student desires to return or if there is an opening on a space available basis.
- The student will be expected to provide written documentation to the Director of WSON regarding the course of specialized treatment and the treatment or mental health counselor's written assessment of the student's ability to perform the academic/clinical requirements of the nursing program following treatment. The counselor's assessment should include any restrictions on the student's activities (i.e., limiting access to narcotics, schedule for counseling and mutual aid group meetings).
- Participation in support programs for recovery from chemical dependence is a lifelong process. The cornerstone to this process is ongoing participation in mutual aid and other support program meetings. Students will be encouraged to attend such meetings and be given necessary time to do so when possible.

### **Noncompliance/Relapse**

If for any reason, the student does not comply with the policies, procedures, or protocols, related to substance use or misuse the student may be administratively dismissed from the nursing program.

If additional or continuing chemical impairment occurs after the implementation of these procedures, the WSON faculty will recommend that the student be administratively dismissed from the nursing program by the WSON Director. The student has the right to grieve and appeal the procedure according to the University guidelines.

## Appendices

- Appendix A: Substance Use Disorder Policy Quick Reference Sheet for Faculty
- Appendix B: List of Treatment Centers Providing Substance Use Disorder Evaluation Services in Metropolitan Atlanta
- Appendix C: List of Drugs Included in Drug Screening Test
- Appendix D: Consent for Drug Testing Upon Admission to WSON
- Appendix E: Symptoms and Other Indicators of Substance Misuse or Dependence
- Appendix F: Reporting Form for Alleged Impaired Student
- Appendix G: Contract for the Impaired Nursing Student
- Appendix H: Agreement for Monitoring the Impaired Student
- Appendix I: Contract for Return to Nursing Program
- Appendix J: Impaired Student Withdrawal Letter
- Appendix K: Impaired Student Nurse Letter for Returning to the Nursing Program
- Appendix L: Impaired Student Dismissal Letter

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Policy revised 5/27/09 by Advisory Committee to Faculty on Clinical Issues with the assistance of Dr. Flora Devine, Legal Counsel for KSU. Members included Barbara Blake, Jamie Lee, and Astrid Wilson

Policy revised 7/21/09 by Advisory Committee to Faculty on Clinical Issues with the assistance of Anne Nichols, Director of KSU Health Center, and Teresa Johnston, Director of KSU Collegiate Recovery Center. Members included Barbara Blake, Jamie Lee and Astrid Wilson.

Policy revised 02/27/2019 by ad hoc committee to review and revise Chemically Impaired Student Nurse Policy (Cheryl Yarde, Leslie Holmes, Alex Giles, and Nancy Ballard) with the assistance of Lindsey Montgomery AOD Prevention Coordinator and Teresa Johnston, Executive Director of KSU Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery.

Reviewed 7/13, 7/14, 7/15, 7/16, 7/19

## Appendix A:

### Kennesaw State University Wellstar School of Nursing

#### Substance Use Disorder Policy Quick Reference Sheet for Faculty

- **For guidance in crisis situations or for information in obtaining services contact the GA Mental Health Crisis Line 1-800-715-4225**
- **If the incident occurs on campus and immediate assistance is needed, call the KSU Behavioral Response Crisis Team at 770-423-6600, or the KSU Police at 770-423-6666 or 911.**

**Faculty members are responsible for reading the entire Substance Use Disorder Policy, located in the Faculty Handbook, but this quick list details the immediate actions required by the Faculty member who observes the behaviors:**

1. Faculty observes student behaviors that may be indicative of Substance Misuse or dependence (see Appendix E)
2. Faculty completes Appendix F, reporting form and documents observed behaviors
  - A. Faculty informs student of need for immediate drug testing at an approved facility (any Advantage Testing facility) and that they have 8 hrs. maximum to complete the drug testing or will face disciplinary action that may include dismissal from the program
  - B. Faculty informs student that they cannot return to class/clinical/lab until a comprehensive evaluation is completed (they will be given further information regarding this at a conference to be held within 5 business days)
  - C. Assist student in arranging transportation to the testing center and/or home (do not let them drive impaired, but student is responsible for calling a family member and paying for it, if a taxi, etc. is called); include a note on Appendix F stating how student left the scene
  - D. Notify the Course Coordinator and the Associate Director of the Program of the above

**\*\*\*\* Convey concern for the student's welfare and be sure to watch for suicidal ideation (see crisis numbers above); remind student there are resources on campus that can help them throughout this process (e.g. the Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery, the KSU Student Health Clinic and the KSU Counseling and Psychological Services)**

3. A conference with faculty, student, Associate Director of program and a member of the Advisory Committee to Faculty on Clinical Performance will be scheduled within 5 business days. During the conference:
  - A. Express concern for the student, describe how behaviors affect clinical/lab/classroom performance
  - B. Student must agree to have a comprehensive evaluation for substance use disorder or will be dismissed from the program
  - C. Student must sign Appendix G and H

- D. Student given Appendix B which includes facilities that can complete the evaluation, including several sites on campus (Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery, KSU Student Health Clinic, or Counseling and Psychological Services)
4. Possible outcomes:
- A. Non-validation of a violation – information removed from student’s file and student can return to clinical/lab/class; **however, a clinical contract may still be necessary if the observed behaviors interfered with clinical performance**
  - B. Validation of a Violation, but student refuses to comply with recommendations – student will be dismissed from program
  - C. Validation of a Violation and student agrees to comply with all recommendations – student signs contracts (Appendices H & I) and can return to class/clinical/lab as long as they remain in compliance and substance free.
  - D. Mixed/Inconclusive results – Student needs second comprehensive evaluation and can return to program as long as they remain compliant with recommendations

*If you have questions about the Substance Use Disorder Policy or any of the above information, please contact the Associate Director of the program or any member of the Advisory to Faculty on Clinical Performance Committee.*

## Appendix B

### Kennesaw State University Wellstar School of Nursing

#### List of Treatment Centers Providing Chemical Abuse Evaluation Services in Metropolitan Atlanta

- There are many options and small residential facilities, as well as out-of-area treatment, some with a sliding scale. Most local treatment facilities can provide resources to patients that may fit their financial needs, geographies and insurance situation.

#### Evaluation and Treatment Centers:

- KSU Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery
- Counseling and Psychological Services at KSU
- KSU Health Clinic
- Talbott Recovery Campus Impaired Professionals Program & Aftercare, Atlanta
- Ridgeview Institute, Smyrna – Impaired Professional’s Program and Aftercare Program
- Metro Atlanta Recovery Residence (M.A.R.R.), Atlanta – Impaired Professional’s Program and Aftercare Program
- Blue Ridge Mountain Recovery, Gall Ground, Addiction Treatment
- Peachford Hospital, Dunwoody – General Treatment
- Anchor Hospital, Jonesboro – General Treatment
- Summit Ridge Hospital, Lawrenceville – General Treatment
- Winnwood Hospital, Rome – General Treatment
- Laurelwood Hospital, Gainesville – General Treatment
- Rivermend, Marietta Ga Outpatient Intensive Programs
- Wellstar Cobb Inpatient Behavioral Health

#### Low-Cost Outpatient Treatment:

- St. Judes Recovery, Atlanta
- Georgia Recovery Center, Marietta
- County Facilities (Fulton Co. Community Services Board, Cobb/Douglas Community Services Board, etc.)
- Cobb County Health Department 24 hour mental health assessments

#### Low-Cost Counseling Resources:

- The Link
- The Verdery Center & Clinic
- Phoenix Program

#### Residential Programs:

- St. Judes Recovery, Atlanta
- Atlanta Woman’s Mission – My Sister’s House, Atlanta
- Breakthru House Inc., Decatur
- Turnaround Recovery Residences
- Salvation Army

Evaluations may also be done by mental health professionals in their private practices

**Appendix C:****Kennesaw State University  
Wellstar School of Nursing****List of Drugs Included in Drug Screening Test**

The Medical Professional Panel Drug Screens includes common street drugs and those drugs that health care workers have access to and misuse. Drugs monitored may include:

- Alfentanil
- Butorphanol (Stadol)
- Fentanyl
- Ketamine
- MDMA (ecstasy)
- Nalbuphine (Nubain)
- Sufentanil
- Tramadol
- Alcohol
- Amphetamines
- Barbiturates
- Benzodiazepines
- Cannabinoids
- Cocaine
- Methadone
- Opiates
- Phencyclidine
- Propoxyphene
- Other drugs may also be detected

**Appendix D:**

**Kennesaw State University  
Consent for Drug Testing Upon Admission and for the Duration of Enrollment in the  
Wellstar School of Nursing**

I understand that as a requirement for admission to the Wellstar School of Nursing (WSN), I must submit to a drug test at a designated laboratory, which will provide the result of the test to the Chair of the WSN and to clinical agencies when requested. The course coordinator and other faculty supervising the student may also be notified as needed. I understand that if the test result is positive, *I may be denied the opportunity to complete the required clinical rotations for graduation or required to comply with the recommendations made by a professional substance use disorder evaluator.*

I further understand that I will be subject to random drug tests while enrolled in the WSN. I will be asked to submit a drug test if there is suspicion of substance misuse. A positive drug test or refusal to submit to testing may result in dismissal from the WSN.

**BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, I INDICATE THAT I HAVE READ, I UNDERSTAND, AND I AGREE TO THE WSN DRUG TESTING POLICY. I UNDERSTAND THAT A NEGATIVE DRUG TEST IS REQUIRED FOR PROGRESSION IN THE SCHOOL OF NURSING.**

**THIS NOTORIZED DOCUMENT CONSTITUTES MY CONSENT FOR DRUG TESTING BY WSN DESIGNATED LABORATORY. IT ALSO CONSTITUES CONSENT FOR THE LABORATORY TO RELEASE THE RESULT OF MY DRUG TESTS TO THE WSN.**

In Witness Whereof, this statement is executed this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the year \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Printed Name

**STATE OF** Georgia      **COUNTY OF** Cobb

On this \_\_\_\_\_ before me appeared \_\_\_\_\_ to be known to be the person described in and who executed the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged that \_\_\_\_\_ executed the same as free act and deed.

Given under my hand and seal on the day and year above written.

**SEAL**

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC

My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E:  
Kennesaw State University  
Wellstar School of Nursing**

**Symptoms and Other Indicators of Substance Misuse or Dependence**

**Physiologic**

- Slurred or rapid speech
- Blackouts
- Trembling hands
- Agitation or restlessness
- Persistent rhinorrhea
- Sweating
- Altered pupil dilation or constriction
- Flushed complexion
- Swollen face
- Bloodshot or glassy eyes
- Odor of alcohol
- Unsteady/staggering gait
- Declining health
- Dramatic changes in weight
- Changes in mental status or cognition
- Palpitations or tachycardia
- Withdrawal symptoms or hangover

**Behavioral**

- Deterioration in personal appearance
- Rapid mood swings
- Increased irritability
- Paranoia
- Rage or anger
- Frequent tardiness
- Increased absenteeism
- Difficulty in meeting deadlines
- Frequently leaves clinical unit or makes self sparse
- Frequent trips to the restroom
- Eats alone, long coffee breaks, long lunch breaks
- Isolation/withdrawal from the group
- Decreased classroom and clinical productivity
- Fluctuating clinical and academic performance
- Making poor clinical decisions
- Errors in judgment
- Forgetfulness, confusion, decreased alertness
- Sleeping in class or clinical
- Inappropriate responses
- Elaborate excuses for behavior
- Blaming others for problems
- Patients complain of ineffective pain relief
- Excessive use of PRN medications or frequent medication errors
- Frequent un-witnessed medication wasting or loss
- Complaints from fellow students, nursing staff, patients, family members
- Self-disclosure of drug or alcohol abuse
- Other behaviors or symptoms of impairment not listed above

**Appendix F:**

**Kennesaw State University  
Wellstar School of Nursing**

**Reporting Form for Alleged Impaired Student and  
Checklist of Specific Observations to Support Reporting Form for Alleged Chemically  
Impaired Nursing Student**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Observed Behaviors: (see attached checklist)

Faculty Comments:

Student Comments:

Faculty Recommendations:

Conference date with student, faculty member filing report, WSON Director, and a representative of the KSU Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery set for \_\_\_\_\_ (Date and time).

Faculty Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(Adapted from Clark, C. Boise State University, Boise, Idaho College of health Sciences, Department of Nursing Policy Statement Regarding the chemically Impaired Nursing Student)

**Checklist of Specific Observations to Support Reporting Form for Alleged Chemically Impaired Nursing Student**

Review the following list of overall behaviors of alleged impaired student and make a check mark next to each situation that applies to the student about whom you are concerned.

**Appearance**

- Decreasing attention to personal appearance and hygiene
- Odor of alcohol on breath
- Glassy, red eyes
- Altered pupil dilation or constriction
- Tremors
- Flushed complexion
- Slurred or rapid speech
- Diaphoresis
- Unsteady/staggering gait
- Persistent rhinorrhea
- Altered mental status
- Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

**Absenteeism**

- Instances of leaving without permission
- Excessive sick days
- Frequent Monday and/or Friday absences
- Repeated absences, particularly if they follow a pattern
- Lateness to clinical/class, especially on Monday morning; and/or returning from lunch/break
- Leaving clinical/class early
- Peculiar and increasingly unbelievable excuses for absences or lateness
- Absent more often than other students for colds, flu, gastritis, etc
- Frequent unscheduled short-term absences (with or without medical explanation)

**Clinical Absenteeism**

- Continued absences from the clinical area more than job requires
- Long coffee breaks, lunch breaks
- Repeated physical illness while in the clinical area
- Frequent trips to the restroom
- Unexplained absences during clinical shift

**High Accident Rate**

- Accidents while on the clinical unit
- Accidents off the clinical unit (but affecting job performance)
- Horseplay, which causes unsafe conditions

### **Difficulty in Concentration**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Work requires greater effort
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jobs take more time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Repeated mistakes due to inattention
- \_\_\_\_\_ Making bad decisions or poor judgment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Errors in charting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Forgetfulness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blackouts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate responses

### **Confusion**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Difficulty following instructions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Increasing difficulty handling complex assignments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Altered mental status or cognition

### **Problems with Memory**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Difficulty in recalling instructions, details, conversations, etc
- \_\_\_\_\_ Difficulty recalling one's own mistakes

### **Poor Relationships in the Clinical/Class Area**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Failure to keep promises and unreasonable excuses for failing to keep promises
- \_\_\_\_\_ Over-reaction to real or imagined criticism
- \_\_\_\_\_ Borrowing money from fellow students/staff/faculty
- \_\_\_\_\_ Unreasonable resentments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Avoidance of associates
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lying and exaggerating
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complaints from students, staff, patients, others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blames other for problems
- \_\_\_\_\_ Isolation/withdrawal from the group

### **Reporting To Clinical/Class**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Coming to/returning to the clinical area/class in an obviously altered condition

### **General Lowered Job Efficiency**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Missed deadlines, unreliable
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complaints from patients, family members, other students, faculty
- \_\_\_\_\_ Improbable excuses for poor job performance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cannot be depended on to be where he/she said or do what he/she said he/she would do
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shuns job assignments, incomplete assignments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is found on units where he/she does not belong

- Frequent medication errors or errors in documentation
- Excessive use of PRN medications
- Frequent un-witnessed medication wasting or loss
- Frequent complaints from patients of inadequate pain relief

### **Uneven Work Pattern**

- Alternate periods of high and low productivity

### **Other Behaviors**

- Sleeping in the clinical area or in class
- Withdraws from others isolates self
- Mood swings
- Increasing irritability
- Relates problems at home, with relationships, with finances, etc

### **The Student Who May Be Diverting Drugs**

- Always volunteers to give medications
- Patient complaints of no relief—discrepancies on records
- Always give IM (PRN) and maximum dose when other nurses do not
- Has frequent wastage, such as spilling drugs or breaking vials, etc
- Unobserved wastage or no co-signature
- Is working on a unit where drugs are missing or have been tampered with
- Frequently volunteers for additional shifts and on unit where not assigned

### **Others**

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Review the items checked. The student's work performance and behaviors may be affected by the use of alcohol/other drugs or a personal/emotional problem. Document each occurrence in an anecdotal note, and when appropriate, conduct a conference. When the performance deficit or adverse situation cannot be attributed to a management problem, follow the WSON of Nursing Policy for the Chemically Impaired Student. Interventions need to include discussion and referral to an experienced professional who can assist the nurse to obtain the appropriate help.

## Appendix G:

### Kennesaw State University Wellstar School of Nursing

#### Contract for the Impaired Nursing Student

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to obtain a comprehensive evaluation for the purpose of professional assessment of substance use disorder status and determination of a treatment plan.

I understand and acknowledge that the admission of misuse at this point may have academic consequences that include:

I am responsible for the cost of the evaluation and any prescribed treatment. Participation in clinical course work will not be permitted until the terms of the treatment plan and return to clinical contract stipulations are fulfilled/ a semester grade, as appropriate, of I (Incomplete), WP (Withdrawal passing), or WF (Withdrawal failing) (Medical Withdrawal) will be assigned for current nursing courses dependent upon factors related to grade determination as stated in the Kennesaw State University Student Handbook and the Guidelines for Faculty Intervention with the Chemically Impaired Student.

I consent to have the results of the evaluation released to the WSON Director.

I understand that failure to abide by the stipulations of my recommended treatment plan and monitoring of my progress will result in my dismissal from the program.

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Adapted from Clark, C. Boise State University, Boise, Idaho College of health Sciences, Department of Nursing Policy Statement Regarding the chemically Impaired Nursing Student)

## Appendix H:

### Kennesaw State University Wellstar School of Nursing

#### Agreement for Monitoring the Impaired Student

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to abide by the following terms for monitoring as determined by the Kennesaw State University Wellstar School of Nursing (WSON):

1. Abstain from the use of all mind-altering and potentially addicting drugs, to include but not be limited to alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, stimulants, narcotics, sedatives, hallucinogenics, tranquilizers, GHB, designer drugs, etc. In the event that such medications are legitimately required for medical care, I will notify the Director of the WSON immediately and request the care provider to submit a letter of explanation. If necessary, I will investigate options other than the use of medications to establish abstinence from all mind-altering chemicals.
2. Provide proof of compliance with an approved, prescribed treatment plan, by allowing my health and treatment records to be released to the WSON Director.
3. Continue in outpatient treatment/aftercare and insure that counselor/therapist submit written reports of progress at the WSON Director's request.

I understand the terms of monitoring may be revised if necessary and that I must be in compliance and show progress in recovery.

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Signature of Witness \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have read the Monitoring Agreement and am participating in the student's recovery program.

Signature of Counselor/Therapist \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Signed agreement reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of WSON Director Date

(Adapted from Clark, C. Boise State University, Boise, Idaho College of health Sciences, Department of Nursing Policy Statement Regarding the chemically Impaired Nursing Student)

## Appendix I:

### Kennesaw State University Wellstar School of Nursing

#### Contract for Return to Nursing Program

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (student), enter into this agreement on the above date with Kennesaw State University, Wellstar School of Nursing (WSON) and the \_\_\_\_\_ Treatment Program.

In consideration of my being permitted to continue in or return to the program through Kennesaw State University, WSON, I agree to the terms and conditions set out in this agreement. I understand I will be allowed to continue in the program only on these terms and conditions and that failure to comply with the terms of this agreement shall be grounds for either additional disciplinary action or dismissal from the program.

I understand that my failure to meet the terms and conditions set out in this agreement violate the terms of my participation in the Program for Chemically Impaired Nursing Students.

The terms and conditions of this agreement shall remain in force for the entire period that I am a student in this program.

This agreement consists of this page, plus the Monitoring Agreement (Appendix E) attached. Additional forms/pages included in this agreement are listed here:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This contract is executed on the date shown above.

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of WSON Director \_\_\_\_\_

(Adapted from Clark, C. Boise State University, Boise, Idaho College of health Sciences, Department of Nursing Policy Statement Regarding the chemically Impaired Nursing Student)

## Appendix J:

### Kennesaw State University Wellstar School of Nursing

#### Impaired Student Withdrawal Letter

Dear Ms./Mr. (name)

As was discussed with you by: \_\_\_\_\_, Wellstar School of Nursing (WSN) Director, we are concerned about your problems and the effect they have upon your performance as a student in the WSON at Kennesaw State University. Therefore, we believe it would be in your best interest to agree to the following conditions.

1. You take a leave of absence that will extend until the end of the (semester, year).
2. Your grade for the following clinical course will be a Withdrawal (W): name of course.
3. You complete the following didactic courses (number and names) by successfully completing the course requirements by \_\_\_(date)\_\_. If you do not successfully complete these courses you will be given a grade of Withdrawal Failing (WF).
4. You seek professional assistance for your problems that have interfered with your ability to adequately perform as a student and seek a medical withdrawal.
5. If you desire to return to your program of study, you notify in writing by \_\_\_(date)\_\_\_ the WSON Director of your intent to return for the (semester/year).
6. Upon receipt of your letter of intent to return to your program of study, you must undergo a health assessment by a health care provider designated by the WSON Director. You must bear the cost of this evaluation. Your health assessment must indicate that you are well enough to re-enter the program. If the assessment does not indicate that you are well enough to re-enter the program, you subsequently will be administratively dismissed from the program. In addition, upon request to the WSON Director, you must provide access to your health records.
7. If a grade of W, WF or F is received for \_\_\_(courses that are to be repeated)\_\_\_, you repeat the course upon the return to the program.
8. If you are given a grade of Incomplete, you must complete the necessary requirements to complete the course.
9. If after re-entry into your program of study there is evidence, once again, of problems interfering with you performance as a student, you will be administratively dismissed from the program, according to applicable policies of Kennesaw State University.

We believe that these conditions are in your best interest and in the best interest of the School of Nursing. If you agree to these conditions, please sign the original copy of this letter. Retain the copy of the letter for your files.

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Dean \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

WSN Director \_\_\_\_\_

(Adapted from Clark, C. Boise State University, Boise, Idaho College of health Sciences, Department of Nursing Policy Statement Regarding the chemically Impaired Nursing Student)

**Appendix K:  
Kennesaw State University  
Wellstar School of Nursing**

**Impaired Nursing Student Letter for Returning to the Nursing Program**

Dear Ms./Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ (Student)

This letter is to inform you that I have received the report of your health assessment conducted by \_\_\_\_\_ (healthcare provider). After careful review of the report, I wish to inform you, provided that you meet the following contingencies, you are permitted to re-enter the Kennesaw State University, Wellstar School of Nursing (WSON) starting \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

1. You abstain from chemical substances.
2. You continue to see your therapist \_\_\_\_\_ (name), at least monthly and more often if needed depending upon your clinical situation.
3. You adhere to the therapies prescribed by your therapist.
4. You become actively involved in a twelve-step program or any other treatment program recommended by your physician.
5. You provide evidence of your compliance with the above-described contingencies, if requested, by the Director of the WSON.
6. You will adhere to the terms of the letter.

Also, please keep in mind that:

1. You must comply with the necessary academic requirements for returning to the nursing program
2. If after returning to your program of study, you experience further academic, disciplinary, or problems that interfere with your performance as a student, you may be subject to disciplinary action according to applicable academic policies of the Kennesaw State University.

Please contact \_\_\_\_\_, WSON Director, no later than \_\_\_\_\_ (date) to make the necessary arrangements for your re-entry.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, WSON

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

[Adapted from Lambert, V. A., & Nugent, K. E., (1994). Addressing the academic progression of students encountering mental health problems. *Nurse Educator*, 19(5), 33-39.]

**Appendix L:  
Kennesaw State University  
Wellstar School of Nursing**

**Impaired Student Dismissal Letter**

Dear Ms./Mr. \_\_\_\_\_

This letter is to inform you that you have violated the contingencies of your re-entry to the Kennesaw State University Wellstar School of Nursing (WSON), which began \_\_\_\_\_ (date). As stated to you in the letter of \_\_\_\_\_ (date):

If after re-entry into your program of study, you should experience further academic, disciplinary or health problems that interfere with your performance as a student, you may be subject to disciplinary action according to applicable policies of Kennesaw State University.

On \_\_\_\_\_ (date), as reported to me by faculty of Kennesaw State University WSON, you appeared impaired (under the influence) and were having difficulty mentally processing information while carrying out your clinical responsibilities with patients. The behavior that you demonstrated is unprofessional and a serious threat to the safety of patients and other healthcare providers.

In addition, you are not successfully meeting the objectives of \_\_\_\_\_ (number and name of course). Attempts have been made to assist you in correcting your academic weaknesses. However, you continue to be unable to successfully achieve the course objectives.

Therefore, effective immediately, you are administratively dismissed from the Kennesaw State University, WSON. In accordance with university and college policies as described in the student handbook page \_\_\_\_\_, you have the right to appeal the dismissal action in writing to the President of the University within five days after receipt of letter.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, WSON

Date \_\_\_\_\_

[Adapted from Lambert, V. A., & Nugent, K. E., (1994). Addressing the academic progression of students encountering mental health problems. *Nurse Educator*, 19(5), 33-39.]