



## Alternative Program for Substance Use Disorder Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the Ohio Board of Nursing's Alternative Program for Substance Use Disorder?

The Ohio Board of Nursing's Alternative Program for Substance Use Disorder (Alternative Program) is a non-disciplinary, non-public monitoring program for licensees or certificate holders who have a substance use disorder.

The Alternative Program is established under Section 4723.35 of the Ohio Revised Code and Chapter 4723-6 of the Ohio Administrative Code. The law and rules allow the Board to abstain from taking disciplinary action against licensees and certificate holders who are found eligible for, and successfully complete, the Alternative Program.

### 2. What are some of the requirements for successful completion of the Alternative Program?

- Application to, and being found eligible for, the Alternative Program;
- Entering into an Alternative Program Participant Agreement;
- Four years of monitoring;
- Abstaining from alcohol and drugs (unless properly prescribed);
- Substance Use Disorder treatment by a program certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services or accredited by the Joint Commission;
- Random drug and alcohol screens;
- Personal reports;
- Interviews with a Monitoring Agent;
- Reports from treating healthcare practitioners;
- Documented sobriety (including alcohol and drug screens) prior to returning to work as a nurse, dialysis technician, or community health worker;
- Approval to seek and accept employment as a nurse, dialysis technician, or community health worker;
- Employer reports;
- Return to employment in a full-time position for an aggregate period of 1 year

### 3. What are some of the eligibility requirements for entering the Alternative Program?

- A current, valid license to practice nursing in Ohio, or a current, valid certificate to practice as a dialysis technician or community health worker in Ohio;
- Temporary surrender of an applicant's license or certificate within 10 business days of the date the application is mailed to the applicant;
- Submission of a completed application to the Board within 60 days of the date the application is mailed to the applicant;
- As part of the application, the applicant submits:
  - A complete bio-psycho-social evaluation performed by a licensed healthcare provider with demonstrated expertise in the treatment of substance use disorder

- Documentation of a diagnosis of substance use disorder
  - An organized treatment plan
  - Signed waivers for receipt and release of information.
- Information in the application indicates that the applicant may be effectively treated for substance use disorder and effectively monitored for compliance with Alternative Program requirements. (Factors that may be considered in making this determination include, but are not limited to: the applicant's nursing practice history, the applicant's criminal history, the applicant's history of drug and alcohol use, how long the applicant has been licensed/certified, whether the applicant abused a position of authority or deprived patients of medication, etc.)

**4. What makes an applicant ineligible for the Alternative Program?**

- A medical and/or psychiatric condition, diagnosis, or disorder, other than substance use disorder, in which the manifest symptoms are not adequately controlled;
- Two or more substance use disorder treatment programs attempted or completed, not counting treatment pertaining to the current treatment plan submitted for purposes of Alternative Program eligibility;
- Substitution or tampering with a substance or drug of abuse;
- Discipline of the applicant's license or certificate in Ohio or another jurisdiction;
- Previous participation in the Alternative Program or a similar program in another jurisdiction;
- Conviction of a felony or an act in another jurisdiction that would constitute a felony in Ohio;
- The public may not be adequately protected from unsafe practice if the applicant enters the Alternative Program; or
- Failure or refusal to cooperate with a Board investigation.

**5. What happens if I am found eligible for the Alternative Program?**

You will receive a letter from the Alternative Program notifying you of your eligibility. You will be contacted by a Monitoring Agent to schedule a meeting to review the Alternative Program Participant Agreement.

**6. What happens if I am found ineligible for the Alternative Program?**

You will receive a letter from the Alternative Program notifying you of your ineligibility. Your case will be reviewed for a determination regarding disciplinary action.

**7. What happens if I am terminated from the Alternative Program for noncompliance?**

You will receive a letter from the Alternative Program notifying you of your termination from the Alternative Program. The Board will initiate disciplinary action based on any prior violations of the Ohio nursing law and rules, and on your termination from the Alternative Program.

**8. How do I apply for the Alternative Program?**

Request an Alternative Program application by sending an email to [alternative@nursing.ohio.gov](mailto:alternative@nursing.ohio.gov) or calling (614) 466-0376. Please give your name, license/certificate number, e-mail address, mailing address and phone number. Your completed application may be mailed to: Ohio Board of Nursing, Alternative Program, 17 South High Street, Suite 660, Columbus, OH 43215-3466.

**If you have questions concerning the Alternative Program, please contact the Alternative Program by email at [alternative@nursing.ohio.gov](mailto:alternative@nursing.ohio.gov).**