

Vermont Board of Nursing Alternative Program Purpose and Objectives

Purpose of the Alternative Program:

The Alternative Program protects the safety and welfare of Vermonters by monitoring the professional practice of participating nurses and nursing assistants who have a substance use disorder. Substance use disorders (SUD) include the misuse, dependency, and addiction to alcohol or to legal or illegal drugs.

Objectives of the Alternative Program:

- Provide a voluntary and non-disciplinary process to facilitate safe practice and ongoing recovery for licensees with SUD
- Encourage early identification, evaluation, and entry into treatment for licensees with SUD
- Assure that the licensee maintains necessary treatment and does not practice until safe to do so
- Provide information and resources to licensees, employers, treating professionals, and the public regarding substance use disorders and the Alternative Program

How the Alternative Program works:

Licensees who apply for admission to the Alternative Program are assessed for compatibility with eligibility criteria. Participation in the Alternative Program is not a right of a licensee or applicant. The Board, in its sole discretion, determines whether an individual is an acceptable candidate. If accepted for the Alternative Program, each participant signs a contract that requires monitoring for an extended period of time. Contract conditions may include:

- Substance abuse counseling and treating professional reports
- Participation in recovery group meetings and submission of a quarterly log
- Random drug and alcohol testing
- Abstinence from drug and alcohol use, with the exception of prescribed medications
- Professional practice only with Program approval, work restrictions, supervision, and employer reports
- Six-month prohibition on administering controlled substances
- Self-assessment reports.

Participants are responsible for all costs associated with application to and participation in the Alternative Program. Participants' records remain confidential except as necessary for program administration, disclosure to another licensing authority, or disclosure to the Vermont Board of Nursing for consideration in a disciplinary matter. Non-compliance with the Alternative Program contract may be reported to the Board of Nursing and may result in public disciplinary action.

For confidential consultation or more information about the Alternative Program, contact the Case Manager at 802-828-1635.