

Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program

Alcohol/Drug abuse assistance for health service professionals licensed, certified or registered by the State of Nebraska

Alcohol/Drug Treatment Options For The Health Care Professional

Alcoholic or drug dependent health care professionals have made many promises to quit to themselves or others over their years of abuse. They vow not to just cut back, but to quit. They know that any continued drinking or drug use will continue the destruction caused by their alcoholism or drug addiction. They know they must end the destruction and begin the reconstruction of their lives so they can live the healthier and happier life they want to lead.

A few alcohol and drug dependent individuals quit on their own. Some go directly into Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous and achieve their recovery there. However, due to the nature of alcohol or drug addiction, most have to use intense, structured treatment provided by alcohol/drug professionals in certified treatment programs to fulfill their commitment to quit.

There are several education and counseling options available to help health care professionals resolve their abuse of alcohol or drugs, if there is not yet an addiction.

- Professional counseling or therapy provided by a qualified counselor or therapist.
- Alcohol/Drug Education Classes. These are generally geared toward those who have had a DUI.
- Substance abuse counseling or a treatment group. Specific focus is on resolving abuse of alcohol or drugs.
- Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-Step self-help recovery programs. These are free, readily available, convenient, and include substantial peer support.

If there is an addiction, treatment needs to be more intense and structured to help the dependent health care professional arrest the addiction. The NE LAP recommends that health care professionals who have concerns that they have a dependency on alcohol or drugs schedule a NE LAP Alcohol/Drug Assessment. The NE LAP Coordinator provides a thorough professional assessment and determines the nature and scope of the alcohol/drug problem and recommends appropriate treatment.

Treatment recommendations must take into consideration the tolerance level and potential withdrawal issues for dependent individuals. Those who will have withdrawal issues will need to have medical management or monitoring of these symptoms when they cease their use of alcohol or drugs.

- Inpatient alcohol/drug dependency treatment allows for intense, structured, medically managed treatment. Generally two-four weeks duration followed by transfer to an intensive outpatient program. Followed by at least one year aftercare/continuing care group meetings one time each week and at least two AA or NA meetings each week.
- Residential treatment. Intense, structured, and includes medical supervision of client. Generally of four weeks duration. Followed by at least one year aftercare/continuing care group meetings one time each week and two AA or NA meetings each week.
- Intense Outpatient Treatment. Six to eight weeks of intense, structured treatment on an outpatient basis. Followed by at least six months of one time a week aftercare/continuing care group meetings and at least one AA or NA meeting each week.

The NE LAP may not make treatment recommendations that match up with what health care professionals find palatable or convenient. The NE LAP recommendations are made according to the diagnosis and what the professional needs to do to successfully arrest their addiction, achieve a sound and lasting recovery and put an end to the progressive destruction of the alcoholism or drug addiction in their lives.

If you are a licensed health service professional wanting more information about alcohol/drug abuse or addiction treatment or other related issues, please contact the Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program (NE LAP) at (800) 851-2336 or (402) 354-8055 or visit our website at www.lapne.org. If you know of or are concerned about a colleague's or employee's alcohol/drug abuse, contact the NE LAP for a consultation. You may be able to save a life, a family or a career.