

The Ohio Society of Health-System Pharmacists Position Statement on Drug Testing in the Workplace

The OSHP has a responsibility to its membership to ensure that pharmacists have adequate information in the areas of drug abuse and drug testing. Thus, OSHP should direct its efforts in the following areas:

1. OSHP should promote education programs for pharmacists on drug abuse. The programs should inform the pharmacist of the signs and symptoms of drug use to facilitate the identification of an impaired employee, and the available treatment programs. This recommendation should be forwarded to the Educational Affairs Division.
2. OSHP should encourage pharmacists to be active in the education of the public and patients on issues related to drug abuse.
3. OSHP should encourage impaired employees to seek rehabilitation and treatment.
4. OSHP should support legislation which promotes its position on drug testing, and the rehabilitation and treatment of impaired health care professionals as a first-line approach.
5. OSHP should keep its membership informed of the various recommendations or any legislation on mandatory and voluntary drug testing in the workplace.

The appropriateness of screening and testing of individuals for drug use in the workplace depends in part on the situation. There are both pros and cons for drug testing programs; each institution needs to determine whether or not it chooses to implement a drug testing program. Issues of concern include legal, social, political, economic, and ethical considerations; the rights of the employer, employee, and consumer; and the accuracy of the available laboratory technology. In consideration of these issues, OSHP has identified four areas to address in regards to drug testing: Pre-employment screening, random sampling without probable cause, drug testing with probable cause, and drug testing as a part of a treatment program.

The following outlines the position of OSHP on drug testing in each area, the reasons for this position, and the employer's responsibilities which must be maintained if the employer chooses to utilize drug testing in the workplace.

I. Pre-employment Screening

The OSHP supports the right of the employer to implement a drug testing program as a condition of employment.

A. Reasons

1. Testing is not selective. All applicants are tested, therefore a potential applicant who is not comfortable with such a policy has the option not to apply to that institution/workplace.
2. Pre-employment screening discourages addicts from applying.
3. Pre-employment screening supports a societal attitude against drug abuse.

B. Employer Responsibilities

1. To maintain patient confidentiality of any pre-existing medical condition or medications identified as a result of the drug test.

2. To have written guidelines outlining proper procedures for documenting, evaluating, and communicating positive and negative results.
3. To have a physician or other healthcare worker specifically trained in the area of drugs of abuse and addiction involved in the evaluation and interpretation of the test results.

II. Drug Testing with Probable Cause

The OSHP supports the right of the employer to request an employee to submit to a drug test if there is probable cause.

A. Reasons:

1. To assure patient safety, any inappropriate actions of an employee which may be the result of impairment must be addressed by the employer.
2. Positive identification of impairment may encourage the employee to seek rehabilitation and treatment earlier, allowing the employee to resume his/her career.

B. Employer Responsibilities:

1. To have written guidelines outlining the particular situations when drug testing is appropriate and the procedures that the employer must follow if drug testing is utilized.
2. To have a physician or other healthcare worker specifically trained in the area of drugs of abuse and addiction involved in the identification of an individual in which probable cause testing is to occur.
3. To encourage treatment and rehabilitation for employees who test positive.
4. To protect the safety of employees and consumers from an impaired employee.

III. Drug Testing as a Part of a Treatment Program

OSHP supports the right of employee treatment and rehabilitation programs to utilize drug testing in the workplace as a part of the program.

A. Reasons:

1. Drug testing in conjunction with the treatment program is performed with the consent of the employee, thus does not violate an individual's right to privacy.
2. Drug testing as a part of a treatment program is under the supervision of a healthcare professional trained in the evaluation and interpretation of the results.
3. Drug testing in conjunction with the treatment program has been demonstrated to reinforce the goals set forth within a treatment program and improve the probability of successful rehabilitation.

B. Employer Responsibilities:

1. To support the utilization of established employee assistance programs.

2. To support the employee in an employee assistance program.

IV. Random Drug Testing without Probable Cause

The OSHP does not support the use of random drug testing of employees without probable cause.

Reasons:

1. Random or forced drug testing of individuals already employed in the services of an institution may be a violation of an individual's rights.
2. In random testing, there is an increased likelihood of misinterpretation of results and a negative impact resulting from these misinterpretations.
3. Testing may lead to an unjustified cost burden on society compared with beneficial results of detecting a few employees with clear substance abuse problems.
4. The potential for the malicious use of the test is clearly possible.
5. Random drug testing of employees does not necessarily identify problem employees. Since impairment or poor work performance is not associated with the detection of the abuse substance in random drug testing, it would be difficult to utilize these test results as a tool to improve impairment or to get the employee into a treatment program.

Adopted by the OSHP House of Delegates
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