In this document, “Resident” refers to both specialty Residents and subspecialty Fellows.

Policy Statement

The University of Colorado School of Medicine Office of Graduate Medical Education (GME) requires that all residents new to a GME training program and scheduled to rotate to a HCA - HealthONE facility submit to a pre-employment drug screen prior to starting clinical rotations at a HCA - HealthONE facility. A negative drug screen is required for participation in any clinical experience.

This policy applies to all residents new to a GME training program beginning in 2013-2014 academic year and who are rotating to a HCA - HealthONE facility in accordance with HCA - HealthONE policies.

Rationale

All health care providers are entrusted with the health, safety and welfare of patients, have access to controlled substances and confidential information and operate in settings that require the exercise of good judgment and ethical behavior. Thus, an assessment of a resident’s possible impairment that could diminish the resident’s capacity to function in such a setting is imperative to promote the highest level of integrity in patient care.

Clinical facilities that serve as educational and training sites for residents increasingly require drug screening for individuals who provide services within the facility and particularly for those individuals who provide patient care. In addition, many licensing agencies require that individuals pass a drug screen as a condition of licensure and/or employment. It is thus in the interests of both residents and GME to identify and resolve potential issues where a resident may not be allowed to participate in a clinical rotation due to use of marijuana (recreational or medical) or illicit use of controlled or illegal substances.

Positive Drug or Adulterated/Substituted Screening Results

The UC Denver policy on drugs and alcohol prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of any controlled substance (illicit drugs of any kind or amount), marijuana (recreational or medical) and the abuse of alcohol by students and employees on university property or as part of any of its activities. Residents who do not pass the required pre-employment drug screen may face disciplinary action up to and including termination. Residents whose test receives an “adulterated” or “substituted” result without a valid medical explanation will be considered a refusal to test. A refusal to take the pre-employment drug screen will be considered a presumptive positive. Residents may be referred for evaluation and treatment through the Colorado Physicians Health Program (CPHP) or another designated program as a condition for remaining in the program. Any treatment recommended or required to remain in the program will be at the expense of the resident.

Additional Policy/Procedure Information

GME takes patient safety very seriously. It is expected that all residents be able to meet the physical and cognitive demands of the clinical setting as well as exhibit sound judgment at all times. Residents who are seriously ill,
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injured or taking medication that impairs judgment (including, but not limited to, lawfully prescribed medications) may not be able to meet this standard, and therefore may not be suitable for the clinical environment where patient safety is the utmost concern. A determination of any conditions on a resident’s ability to participate in clinical experiences or to otherwise proceed in the program will be handled on a case by case basis by the Program Director, Department Chair and the Associate Dean for GME.

Drug Screening Procedure

- Residents will be drug screened during the pre-employment immunization screening that all residents are required to undergo during orientation week in a GME Training Program. Residents will be required to complete a Drug Screen Authorization form at the time of the drug screen; this form includes the authorization for results to be released to the designated individual within the GME Office. GME will cover the costs of the pre-employment drug screen.
- Review of drug screen results will be conducted by the Medical Review Officer of the designated vendor. Passing or failing levels will be determined by the DOT threshold (49 CFR Part 40). Results of the resident drug screen will be reported to the designated individual in GME Office. The drug screen results of residents who receive a positive screen will be reviewed by the GME Credentials Committee and any consequences will be communicated to the resident in writing.
- Drug screens that are reported as indeterminate or negative dilute must be repeated, sometimes under direct observation.
- In the event an insufficient specimen is provided during the drug screen the resident will be urged to drink additional fluid (up to 40 ounces), until the resident can provide a sufficient urine specimen or 3 hours have elapsed. If the resident is unable to provide a sufficient specimen after 3 hours, the resident will be given the opportunity to provide a legitimate medical explanation, such as a physician’s evaluation documenting a medical reason why the resident is unable to provide an adequate amount of urine. If no acceptable medical explanation is provided according to DOT rules, it will be treated as a refusal to test, which is a presumptive positive.
- After the pre-employment drug screening, residents will be responsible for all costs of any required repeat drug screening.
- Any resident who receives a positive screen, or an “adulterated” or “substituted” result, will be given the opportunity to provide a legitimate medical explanation, such as physician’s prescription for the positive result. A medical marijuana prescription will not be accepted as a legitimate medical explanation.
- The pre-employment drug screening results will be recorded in an internal database within the GME Office and maintained only for the duration of residency/fellowship for each resident.
- Drug screen results may be reported to a HCA-HealthONE facility in compliance with contractual agreements.
- Any individual resident may be required at any time to submit to immediate drug screening for cause.
- Residents who refuse to submit to any required drug screen may be dismissed from their education program.
- Unless specified above, the designated vendor for the pre-employment drug screenings will follow DOT standard procedures for the drug screenings.