The University of Colorado
Anschutz Medical Center
College of Nursing

Policy and Procedure: DRUG SCREEN

Policy Statement:
The University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Center College of Nursing requires, as a matter of routine, all matriculating students (participating in a clinical program of study) to submit to a drug screen. The student will comply with directions given regarding the designated vendor and any appropriate follow up that may be required. The drug screen consists of the following: marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates and PCP.

Applicability:
This policy applies to accepted applicants and currently enrolled nursing students in an educational program at the University of Colorado Denver College of Nursing.

Exemption: Students enrolled in PhD program or non-degree program of study. Drug screening applies if program of study includes a clinical course. Certificate programs which student is enrolled in clinical course work also require a drug screen.

Supporting Background Information for Drug Screening:

Safety and Well-Being of Patients. 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 student’s possible impairment that diminishes his/her capacity to function in such a setting is imperative to promote the highest level of integrity in health care services.

Accreditation Standards. Clinical facilities are increasingly interpreting standards by accreditation agencies, such as The Joint Commission, to require drug screening for security purposes on individuals who provide services within the facility and especially those who supervise care and render treatment including controlled substances. To facilitate this requirement the College of Nursing has agreed to conduct drug screenings for students who participate in clinical training programs.

Licensure Issues. Clinical rotations and early experiential rotations are an essential element in certain health science curricula. Students who cannot participate in clinical rotations due to revealed illegal use of controlled or illegal substances may be unable to fulfill the requirements of the program for advancement or graduation. Additionally, many healthcare licensing agencies require individuals to pass a drug screening panel as a condition of licensure or employment. Therefore, it is in everyone’s interest to resolve these issues, prior to a commitment of resources by the College of Nursing or the student.
Contractual Obligations. The College of Nursing is obligated to meet the contractual requirements contained in affiliation agreements between the College of Nursing and the various healthcare facilities. Many of the healthcare facilities that provide clinical learning experiences for our students require drug screening of all employees, volunteers and trainees.

Liability Issues. Given the current medical liability environment, The University of Colorado Denver and health care facilities are appropriately attentive to those factors that may adversely affect the security of the clinical environment and thus increase their liability exposure. As a result, schools and health care facilities, both independently and, at times, through legislative mandate, have appropriately sought to enhance their scrutiny of professional and non-professional students involved in patient care activities.

Drug Screening Procedure:

1. Nursing program applicant/student receives information about the requirement for drug screening, results reporting and associated fees from the Office of Clinical Affairs via letter in the Admissions packet.

2. Applicant/student submits Drug Screen Information Form and payment for drug screen to the Office of Student Affairs and Diversity; the check is payable to UC-Denver for the designated fee.

3. Applicant/student is to complete drug screening process before May 1 and December 1 of the calendar year, correlated to their admission to the nursing program of Summer or Spring. For Graduate/Post-licensure students: complete drug screening process by August 1 for Fall admission unless otherwise stated.

4. Applicant receives instructions (Drug Screening Instructions) from the Office of Clinical Affairs regarding location of designated vendor drug screen sites and a Drug Screen Authorization document to bring to designated vendor drug screen site:
   a. Student completes the Drug Screen Authorization document
   b. Student selects designated vendor screening site from list provided.
   c. Drug Screen Authorization document brought to screening site by student along with valid photo ID (Colorado State issued driver’s license or State-issued ID).
   d. Student maintains designated vendor receipt of drug screen issued at time of screening.

5. Results of applicant/student drug screen is electronically reported directly to the Office of Clinical Affairs from the designated vendor. Results are typically returned in two business days. Review of drug screen results occurs with the Medical Director of the designated vendor and the Office of Clinical Affairs.
6. Applicant/Student has the right to review the information reported by the designated vendor for accuracy and completeness and to request that the designated vendor verify that the results of the drug screen provided are correct. Prior to making a final determination that may adversely affect the applicant or student, the College of Nursing will inform the student or applicant of his/her rights, how to contact the designated vendor to challenge the accuracy of the report, and that the designated vendor was not involved in any decisions made by the College of Nursing. A student or accepted applicant who does not pass or refuses to submit a drug screen may be dismissed from the program. Students who do not pass the drug screen may be referred to Peer Assistance Services for consultation at the student’s expense.

7. Applicant/student drug screen results are recorded in an internal database by the Office of Clinical Affairs.

8. Negative student drug screen results are reported to clinical agency, for clinical placement purpose only, as affirmative in meeting affiliation agreement requirements.

9. The College of Nursing reserves the right to require any individual student to submit to immediate drug screening at any time, on a for-cause basis. Compliance with contractual requirements contained in affiliation agreements with various healthcare facilities will dictate the process, handling and reporting of “for cause” drug screening of an individual student. A failed drug screen will result in a minimum of an immediate administrative withdrawal from courses, placement on a leave of absence and a referral to Peer Assistance Services for counseling at the student’s expense. A return to the College of Nursing program would be considered upon successful completion of Peer Assistance Services’ program. Failure to comply with the College of Nursing’s requests may result in a dismissal form the nursing program.

Additional Policy/Procedure Information:

Medical Marijuana: The College of Nursing takes patient safety very seriously. The Technical Standards for students (http://www.nursing.ucdenver.edu/pdf/2009-10StudentHandbook.pdf pages 13-18) require that all students be able to meet the physical and cognitive demands of the clinical setting as well as exhibit sound judgment at all times. Students who are seriously ill, injured or taking medication that impairs judgment (including – but not limited to – Medical Marijuana) may not be able to meet the Technical Standards, and therefore, may not be suitable for the clinical environment where patient safety is the topmost concern. Students who take Medical Marijuana should consider deferring entry into the College of Nursing while they explore other avenue of treatment which would allow them to meet the Technical Standards and pass a drug screen.

Previous Drug Screens: Applicants/students who have completed a drug screen by their employer or clinical agency may be able to submit those results for the admission drug screening at the College of Nursing provided:

1. The screening meets the minimum requirements of the stand 5 panel Drug Screen (marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates and PCP).
2. The employer or clinical agency performing the drug screening must submit the results directly to the Office of Clinical Affairs. Drug screen results sent by the applicant/student will not be accepted.

3. The drug screening must have been done within 6 months prior to the May 1 or December 1 deadline dates.

Rural or Out of State Applicants/Students: The College of Nursing will attempt to find a designated drug screen vendor in the rural or out of state area. The applicant/student must complete the second section of the Drug Screen Information Form to request that the College of Nursing locate a local drug screen vendor. The applicant/student will be contacted individually, by email, with a separate set of instructions and deadlines for the drug screening.

**Associated Documents:**

- Drug Screening Instructions
- Drug Screen Information Form
- Drug Screen Authorization
- Letter from the Associate Dean for Clinical & Community Affairs
- Map of designated vendor drug screening sites

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