

## What does the EMS Impaired Practitioner Program provide?

- Ongoing monitoring of the chemically dependent EMT.
- Consultation to employers regarding concerns of identification.
- Availability to consult with EMT's who are concerned about their own alcohol or drug use.
- Resources for counseling and drugs of abuse testing.
- Assists EMS personnel in the development of a relationship with AA, NA, or other 12-step support groups.
- Provides structure to ensure a safe work environment for the EMT in recovery.
- Maintains privacy for the EMT while actively involved in the monitoring program. Treatment providers and employers are actively involved in the monitoring process.



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## Emergency Medical Services Impaired Practitioner Program



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## Some signs and symptoms of Substance Abuse

### Alcohol Dependency

- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness.
- Irritability & mood swings, tendency to isolate.
- Elaborate excuses for behavior; unkempt appearance.
- Blackouts (temporary amnesia).
- Impaired motor coordination, slurred speech, flushed face, bloodshot eyes.
- Numerous injuries, burns, bruises, etc.
- Smell of alcohol on breath, excessive use of mouthwash or mints.

### Drug Dependency

- Rapid mood and/or performance changes.
- Wears long sleeves at all times.
- Frequent absence from unit, frequent use of restroom.
- Excessive overtime, usually arriving early or staying late.
- Increased somatic complaints with an increase in pain medication prescriptions.
- Consistently signs out greater amounts of controlled drugs than anyone else; excessive drug wastage.
- Often medicates other's patients.
- Patients complain that pain medication is inadequate or they deny receiving it.
- Numerous discrepancies in signing and documentation procedure regarding controlled substances.

## What is the EMS Impaired Practitioner Program?

- The EMS Impaired Practitioner Program is a confidential, voluntary alternative to formal disciplinary action for licensed EMS personnel who may be impaired due to the habitual or regular use of drugs and/or alcohol.
- DDH Regulation 7.27.2.13(F), NMSA 1978 provides the mechanism for which the EMS Bureau may establish and maintain a diversion program for chemically dependent Emergency Medical Technicians, Dispatchers and EMS First Responders.
- An EMT who habitually or regularly uses alcohol and/or drugs presents a potential danger to his/her patients because of the use of chemicals can impair an EMT's ability to safely practice.
- It is our wish that EMS personnel that are chemically dependent will recognize their illness, seek treatment, and accept admission into the EMS Impaired Practitioner Program.

## What are the objectives of the EMS Impaired Practitioner Program?

- To ensure the health, safety and welfare of NM citizens.
- To identify chemically dependent EMS personnel or EMS personnel who are at risk for a chemical dependency before the disease progresses to the point where valuable EMTs are unable to practice because of the use of drugs and alcohol.
- To assist EMS personnel to get the necessary treatment needed to stop using drugs and alcohol.
- To keep recovering EMS personnel productive by helping them to remain in practice or to return to practice as soon as possible.
- To mentor the EMS personnel's practice and recovery to assure that the EMT is a safe practitioner.
- To educate the public and the EMS profession about chemical dependency.
- To reduce the problem of chemical dependence in the EMS profession.