



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BUREAU OF PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL AFFAIRS  
PROFESSIONAL HEALTH MONITORING PROGRAMS  
PO BOX 10569  
HARRISBURG, PA 17105-0569  
800-554-3428  
717-783-4857  
[www.dos.pa.gov/phmp](http://www.dos.pa.gov/phmp)

### **Voluntary Recovery Program**

**Objective:** The Voluntary Recovery Program (VRP) provides a method by which licensed health care professionals suffering from a mental or physical disorder can be directed to appropriate treatment and receive monitoring to ensure that they remain capable of practicing safely. The program offers the eligible professional an alternative to board disciplinary action from becoming a permanent part of his or her professional licensing record. However, the VRP's non-public format is a privilege and not a right; therefore, a licensee declining to cooperate with the VRP will exclude the licensee from further VRP consideration.

**Eligibility Requirements:** To be eligible for VRP participation, a licensee must:

1. Complete an evaluation by a provider approved by the VRP and have the assessor determine that a diagnosed mental or physical disorder exists.
2. Adhere to a treatment plan recommended by the VRP-approved provider(s) and approved by the VRP.
3. Enter into a VRP Consent Agreement, which is approved by the licensing board, providing that disciplinary action, including suspension or revocation, will be deferred so long as the licensed professional adheres to the VRP Consent Agreement.
4. Successfully complete at least three years of monitoring under the VRP Consent Agreement that includes VRP supervision of the licensee's treatment and recovery process, work performance, professional support group attendance, abstention from prohibited substances, and random drug testing.

**Terms and Conditions for VRP Participation:** To enroll and maintain good standing in the VRP, the licensee must:

1. Agree not to accept or continue employment in any position requiring licensure until cleared to do so by the VRP case manager and a VRP-approved provider.
2. Sign the Participation Cooperation Form; complete the Personal Data Sheet.
3. Complete a VRP-approved assessment and/or treatment (at licensee expense).

4. Comply with the aftercare/continuing care plan developed by the VRP-approved assessor/treatment provider.
5. When permitted to return to licensed practice by the VRP, the licensee:
  - A. Shall only work under direct supervision.
  - B. Shall adhere to all practice limitations established by the VRP case manager.
  - C. Shall not do any of the following until specific written permission is granted by the VRP case manager:
    - (1) Practice nursing in any capacity that involves the administration of controlled substances (typically for a period of no less than six months upon returning to licensed practice);
    - (2) Function as a supervisor;
    - (3) Practice in a private practice setting;
    - (4) Practice in an emergency room, operating room, intensive care unit, cardiac catheterization laboratory, or coronary care unit; or
    - (5) Practice as an agency nurse.
6. Completely abstain from the use of all controlled substances, caution legend (prescription) drugs, mood altering drugs or drugs of abuse including alcohol in any form, except under the following:
  - A. The licensee is a bona fide patient of a licensed health care practitioner who is aware of the licensee's impairment and participation in the VRP;
  - B. Such medications are lawfully prescribed by the licensee's treating practitioner and approved by the VRP case manager;
  - C. The licensee provides the VRP, within 48 hours of receiving the prescription, written notification of the prescription including name of prescribing practitioner, illness or condition diagnosed, the type, strength, amount and dosage.
7. Avoid all products containing alcohol including but not limited to: over-the-counter medications (e.g. cough syrup), mouthwash, hygiene products, topical gels or medications, foods or liquids containing alcohol (e.g. vanilla extract, kombucha).
8. Avoid all foods containing poppy seeds.
9. Undergo random drug testing as directed by the VRP (at licensee expense).

10. Arrange for submission to the VRP of regularly scheduled progress reports by treatment provider(s) and/or the workplace supervisor or monitor.
11. Sign a VRP Consent Agreement with the licensing board deferring formal disciplinary action for a period of no less than three years.
12. When a peer assistance program is available, including, but not limited to, the Physicians' Health Program (PHP), Pennsylvania Nurse Peer Assistance Program (PNAP), and Secundum Artem – Reaching Pharmacists with Help (SARPH), the licensee shall enroll in the program and comply with all recommendations.
13. Provide treatment provider(s) and employer(s) with a copy of the VRP Consent Agreement with the licensing board.
14. Submit monthly verification of attendance at required support group meetings (number of meetings as recommended by the VRP-approved treatment provider, but never less than twice per week).
15. If requested by the VRP, the licensee will agree to inactivate his/her professional license and maintain an inactive license until the VRP provides the licensee with written permission to pursue reactivation.

**Ineligible for VRP participation include:**

1. Licensees convicted of, pleading guilty, or nolo contendere to either a felony or a misdemeanor under the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act.
2. Licensees with a history of practice problems indicating significant patient harm.
3. Licensees who have been involved in the diversion of controlled substances for the primary purpose of sale or distribution.
4. Licensees who have committed sexual boundary violations.
5. Licensees who have failed to successfully complete a similar program in another jurisdiction.
6. Licensees who declined or failed to cooperate with the VRP.