

North Carolina Physician Health Plan

Values: **Professionalism, Compassion, Balance and Teamwork**

PROFESSIONALISM

We consistently act in a professional manner.

1. NCPHP staff serves with honesty and integrity
 2. NCPHP staff incorporates NCPHP values into each decision, interaction and policy
 3. NCPHP implements fair and transparent policies
- Fair and transparent policies and procedures are critical to professionals' trust in NCPHP. Trust facilitates professionals' willingness to self-refer or to refer colleagues.
 - NCPHP staff and volunteers also deserve fairness, transparency and respect as well as freedom from capricious attacks by disgruntled professionals.
 - Conflicts of interest are inherent in human interactions and cannot be eliminated. However, NCPHP strives to minimize actual conflicts, is transparent in disclosing any known conflicts of interest, and addresses the perception of conflicts.
 - NCPHP strives to avoid preconceived notions about severity of illness, diagnosis and fitness for duty prior to gathering all relevant data, and should distinguish between fact and opinion in providing advocacy.
 - NCPHP staff and volunteers, many of whom are specialists in substance use disorders and mental health, have an ethical responsibility to exercise their best professional judgment involving situations that are often complex. Even when NCPHP decisions and recommendations are not received well, staff should nonetheless conduct themselves with integrity, compassion, honesty and fortitude.

COMPASSION

We interact with all participants and others in a humane and compassionate manner.

- NCPHP treats all those with whom we interact with compassion, dignity and respect, in the service of providing optimal support for the professional suffering with illness.
- NCPHP acknowledges that consequences happen in the course of addiction and other illnesses, and that adverse professional consequences cannot always be prevented. However, NCPHP supports individuals suffering from consequences arising from illness and encourages appropriate action to manage issues constructively and avoid future problems.
- NCPHP acknowledges the stigma still associated with addiction and other illnesses. We shall strive to support the individual afflicted by stigma and/or shame, and to educate the professional community and the public at every opportunity to reduce that stigma.

BALANCE

We seek to find the optimal balance in addressing potentially competing needs.

1. Between public safety and professionals' autonomy/need to earn a living
 2. Between consistency and each professional's unique circumstances
 3. Between open, credible advocacy and professionals' privacy
- NCPHP's work with professionals in safety-sensitive occupations necessitates close attention to balancing the rights and needs of individuals with the greater good.
 - Professional health and wellness needs are critically important in their own right, and also in the service of patient safety. Professional monitoring programs inherently have dual roles, with responsibilities to professionals and to the patients they serve. Professionals' needs and patient safety needs are rarely in direct conflict, but when they are, patient safety must come first.
 - NCPHP promotes professionals' autonomy to choose treatment options, within the limits of currently understood best clinical practices, and encourages individuals to act in their own best personal and professional interests in making these choices.
 - Abstinence is the preferred and proven path to long-term recovery from substance use disorders for health care professionals and others in safety-sensitive positions. When potentially impairing medications or other treatments are medically indicated, careful consideration must be given to the impact of those treatments on fitness for duty. It is appropriate for health care professionals to take sick leave while they are under the influence of potentially impairing medications.
 - NCPHP must provide advocacy for participants and evaluatees honestly and openly in order to preserve credibility. NCPHP therefore provides only relevant substantive positive and negative information, while preserving the professional's privacy and anonymity as much as possible, and encouraging others to do the same. In a complex medical regulatory environment, confidentiality of participant information is foundational for establishing trust in NCPHP and to professionals' willingness to seek help early.
 - NCPHP exists in large part to promote medical professionals' safe practice, and supports individuals in maintaining or regaining safe medical practice whenever possible.

TEAMWORK

We act as a team and cooperate effectively with external stakeholders.

- NCPHP staff works collaboratively as a team, demonstrating core values in all interactions with each other, volunteers and participants.
- NCPHP is accountable to the larger medical community and the public. It engages in continuous quality improvement and strives to collaboratively engage the community for feedback, input and oversight regarding NCPHP processes.
- NCPHP networks with peer state and national organizations to contribute to and learn from best practices in professional health.