

CARING FOR OUR OWN: AL Professionals Health Program (APHP)

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OBJECTIVES

1. Identify barriers to seeking help
2. Become familiar with AL Codes and Joint Commission standards as they relate to physician health
3. Understand the reporting and monitoring process of APHP

WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT?



Quality

Cost

Patient
Experience/
Outcome

Wellbeing
of clinicians

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Substance Use Disorders in Physicians

- Incidence similar to general population (T/F)
- Incidence is <5%, 10-15%, 23-27%
- Most commonly abused drug?
- Prognosis?

Mental Health Issues in Physicians

- Estimated # of physician suicides in U.S. each year is 100-200, 300-400, 500-600
- Prevalence of depression in residents is $>$, $<$, $=$ to similarly aged individuals in the U.S.
- Suicide rate for physicians is lower/higher than their non-physician counterparts

Burnout

Emotional exhaustion, ineffectiveness, depersonalization

- Is more common in males T/F
- Is more prevalent in early, mid, or late career?
- Over 50% of physicians endorse at least 1 symptom

T/F

BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP

- Lack of confidentiality
- Doesn't know resources
- Not enough time

- Effect on career
- Referrals will stop
- Strong defense mechanisms

WHY ARE WE SLOW TO INTERVENE?

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Fear of being wrong | 4. Fear of retaliation |
| 2. Loss of revenue | 5. Fear of career consequences |
| 3. Unclear reporting process | |

TIME LINE

- 1958 – AMA defines alcoholism as a disease
- 1973 – “The Sick Physician”, JAMA
- 1980s – AMA encourages PHPs
- 1988 – AL law establishes APHP
- 2001 – JC MS 2.6
- 2009 – JC LD 3.10
- 2010 – 46 PHPs
- 2018 – AL changes licensure questions

Alabama Laws

Code 34-24-361(b)

Physicians have a duty to report to the Medical Board

Code 34-24-405 (c)

A report to APHP satisfies above requirement

Section 22-5A-7

Any reporting person or agency who in good faith reports shall be immune from liability

2018 AL Licensure Question Revision

Have you engaged in the excessive use of alcohol, controlled substances, or the use of illegal drugs, or received any therapy or treatment for alcohol or drug use or sexual boundary issues? (If you are a participant in the Alabama Physician Health Program and are in compliance with your contract, you may answer “No” to this question, **such answer for this purpose will not be deemed upon certification as providing false information to the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners or the Medical Licensure Commission of Alabama**).

If you answered “Yes”, then a description is required.

ALABAMA PHYSICIAN HEALTH PROGRAM (APHP)

Mission Statement: to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public, while also supporting the health and integrity of Alabama physicians, physician assistants, residents, and medical students.

Monitored Conditions

- Substance use and addictive disorders
- Psychiatric disorders
- Boundary violations
- Medical illnesses
- Unprofessional behavior

Program Statistics

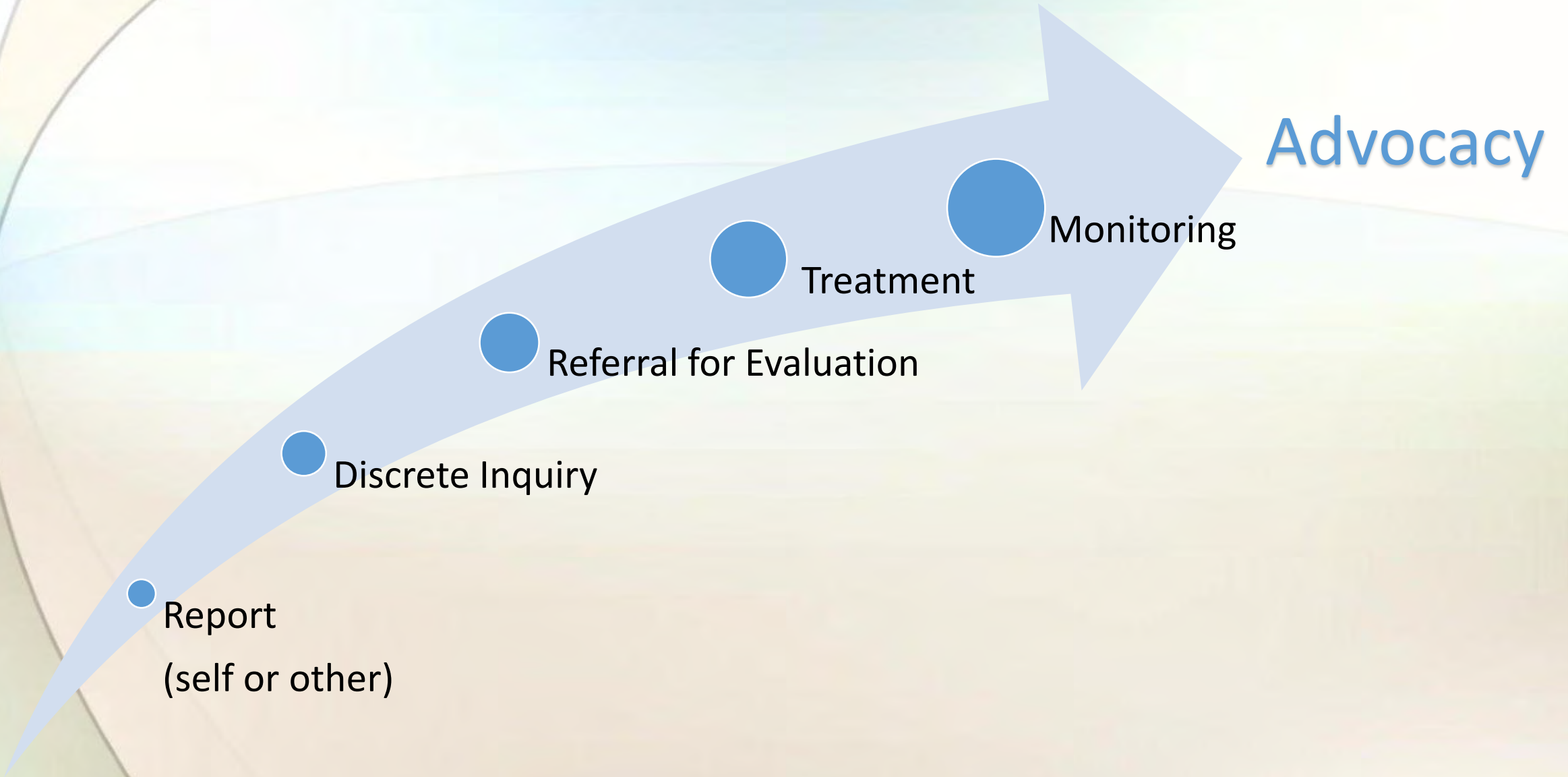
- 115 referrals as of early December 2019

Reasons:

- 38 substance use disorders
- 23 psychiatric disorders
- 06 disruptive behaviors
- 07 boundary issues
- 04 physical illness
- 37 licensure application

- Current active contracts: 293
- Total number of referrals since 1991 ~2,600

HOW IT WORKS



Monitoring and Accountability

- Assistance agreements
- Duration of monitoring: 1 year to career long
- Violations of agreements

ADVANTAGES OF APHP MONITORING

- Public safety
- Confidentiality
- Better prognosis
- Advocacy – employees, insurance carriers, etc...
- No discipline against license

You are not alone!

CONTACT INFORMATION

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