NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY – FEINBERG SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
DRUG & ALCOHOL MATRICULATION SCREENING POLICY

Introduction

This policy applies to all medical students matriculating to the Feinberg School of Medicine (FSM) undergraduate medical degree program. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students entrusted with the health, safety and welfare of patients operate in clinical settings with good judgement and ethical behavior. Substance abuse can impair a student’s capacity to safely function in such a setting. It is imperative that we promote safe and high-quality patient care, while also identifying students who may need support, treatment and intervention. As students begin interacting with patients during the first week of school, drug testing must be completed by July 1st prior to matriculation to FSM. Drug testing will be administered by Certiphi Screening. Please note, all of our clinical affiliates also require that physicians, staff and students undergo drug screening.

Definitions

- Certiphi Urine Drug Panel Testing: Tests for Amphetamines, Cocaine Metabolites, Marijuana Metabolites, Opiates, Phencyclidine, Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines, Methadone, Propoxyphene, MDMA/Ecstasy)
- Medical Review Officer (MRO): Certified Medical Review Officer ensures security, data protection and procedural handling of positive screens.

Procedure

Feinberg School of Medicine medical students must submit to the required drug screening prior to matriculation or they will not be allowed to enroll at Feinberg School of Medicine. Unexcused positive results may subject students to denial of medical school registration.

The Drug Screening Test will be administered through a single-source, third party vendor, Certiphi Screening. The screening service will encompass data management/administration/reporting, specimen collection and laboratory services. Certiphi will provide a list of collection sites nearest to students. Program managers will help students locate collection sites and help set up appointments. The student must also complete all releases required for FSM to receive the laboratory report. Students are responsible for payment of any fees charged by Certiphi to supply this service. Standard drug screening will cost approximately $29. If a student is experiencing financial hardship and cannot cover the cost of the testing, the student may contact the Associate Dean for Student Affairs to discuss. Results from a laboratory other than the one designated by Feinberg through Certiphi will not be accepted.
Positive Drug Screen: If the specimen comes back to the MRO as NON-negative or positive, the MRO will call the student and inquire regarding any medications prescribed by a physician for medical reasons. The MRO will inform the student on how they can verify that they are on physician prescribed medications. If a medical explanation for use is approved by the MRO, the result will be changed to negative. Feinberg will only receive a non-negative result if a medical explanation is not approved by the MRO.

Drug Screen Result other than Positive or Negative: If the student’s drug screen result is neither positive nor negative, then the test must be repeated (at the students’ expense). A test result that is neither positive nor negative includes but is not limited to a Negative Dilute, Positive Dilute, Positive No Contact, or Cancelled specimen.

If a student has a NON-negative drug screen, he/she will not be permitted to matriculate at Feinberg until the Associate Dean for Admissions reviews the case at which time the student will be able to offer an explanation of the non-negative result. A NON-negative result could result in revocation of admission. Students testing non-negative will be evaluated prior to matriculation and may be referred to an identified, independent expert for evaluation and treatment recommendations.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why I am required to have a drug screen?
   - The Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine is committed to providing the highest level of educational activity and professional conduct throughout all programs. As such, it has a responsibility to ensure that students are functioning free from the influence of illicit or illegal substances. The use of controlled (unless prescribed by a clinician) or illegal substances, is prohibited.
   - Hospitals are accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and must maintain compliance with all current rules, regulations and standards. JCAHO standard HR 1.20 requires that all individuals involved in the delivery of health care must comply with applicable health screening requirements established by organizations. As such, anyone who is involved with patient care, including FSM students, must meet the requirements of the clinical site. This may include pre-clinical testing for drugs of abuse through urine drug screening (UDS). As FSM students begin early clinical immersion experiences from their first weeks of medical school, the urine drug screening is a matriculation requirement. In order to comply with the requirements of NUFSM affiliated institutions that require urine drug screening, drug testing must be completed before students are allowed to begin their assignments at clinical sites.

2. Which substances are screened for on the 10-panel urine test?
   - Amphetamines
   - Barbiturates
   - Benzodiazepines
   - Cannabinoids
• Cocaine
• MDMA
• Methadone
• Opiates
• Phencyclidine
• Propoxyphene

3. What happens if there is one or more positive result on my drug screen?
   - Certiphi employs Medical Review Officers (MROs) who will review the results from the lab to check if the screening was positive for any drugs. If the test is negative for drugs then the results are sent to the Associate Dean for Admissions. If positive, then the MRO reaches out to the student three times, once per business day, to see if the student is on any prescription medication. The MRO calls, e-mails, and calls again to get in touch with the student. If the student doesn’t answer or respond to the MRO, then the positive results are sent to the Associate Dean for Admissions. If the student answers the MRO and can provide a current prescription medication he/she is on then the MRO will review it to see if it justifies the positive result. If the positive result is justified by a current prescription, then the report is updated to a negative for drugs found and passed along to the Associate Dean for Admissions. If the student cannot provide a prescription medication then the results are considered positive and sent to the Associate Dean for Admissions. This process ensures the results of the drug screenings are as accurate as possible while taking in the account of any prescription medication the student may be on.

4. Who is aware of results?
   - The report procured during this process will not be released to any party other than the Associate Dean for Admissions. The Augusta Webster Office of Medical Education (AWOME) is not notified of results.

5. Are medical records stored in the August Webster Office of Medical Education (AWOME)?
   - No.