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 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 treatment intervention. As students begin interacting with patients during the first week of school, drug testing must be completed by July 15th prior to the August matriculation date. Drug testing will be administered by Certiphi 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 Feinberg School 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.

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.

Results of the laboratory reports will be communicated directly by Certiphi to the Associate Dean for Admissions. If a student has a positive or NON-negative drug screen, he/she will not be permitted to matriculate at Feinberg until the Associate Dean for Admissions reviews the case. A positive or NON-negative result could result in revocation of admission. Students testing positive will be evaluated prior to matriculation and may be referred to an identified, independent expert for evaluation and treatment recommendations.