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 judgment and ethical behavior. Substance abuse can impair a student's capacity to safely function in such a setting, and can therefore compromise patient safety. 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.

Although Illinois law allows for the use of medical marijuana and recreational marijuana in certain circumstances, federal laws prohibit marijuana use, possession, and distribution on property owned by institutions of higher education or in any activities operated by such institutions. In addition, Illinois law states that colleges and universities are not prevented from prohibiting marijuana, consistent with federal law. As such, the use, possession, and distribution of marijuana at FSM, elsewhere on Northwestern University's campuses (or other University property), or in connection with any part of the University's educational or other activities, regardless of where those activities occur, remains prohibited. Moreover, in order to rotate at clinical sites, all FSM students are bound by the policies and procedures of the clinical site, which may be more restrictive and forbid the use of certain substances even if that use is off-site or would otherwise be considered legal under state or local law (e.g., medical marijuana, cannabis for recreational use).

Definitions

- Certiphi Urine Drug Panel Testing: Tests for Amphetamines, Cocaine Metabolites, Marijuana Metabolites, Opiates, Phencyclidine, Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines, Methadone, Propoxyphene, MDMA/Ecstasy
- Certiphi-designated 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 revocation of an offer of admission.

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. Certiphi 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, they will not be permitted to matriculate at Feinberg pending the outcome of a review of the case by the Associate Dean for Admissions. As part of this review, the student will be able to offer an explanation of the NON-negative result. A NON-negative result could result in a decision to revoke admission. Such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis that considers an individualized assessment of the circumstances. 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?**
    - 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 FSM 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. **Who is made aware of drug screen results?**
    - The Certiphi report is initially released to the Associate Dean for Admissions. In the event of a non-negative result, others at FSM may receive copies of the report as needed to address the situation. The Augusta Webster Office of Medical Education (AWOME) is not notified of results.

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

5. **Is there a possibility of drug screening outside of the time of matriculation?**
    - Yes. Our clinical affiliates or those you may elect to rotate at during your medical school training, may request additional drug screening or select you for random drug testing.