

PHYSICIAN HEALTH PROGRAM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Note: The identity of persons receiving assistance from PHP is strictly confidential.)

Composition

1. The Committee shall consist of up to eight members appointed by the Board of Directors of the SMA, plus one each appointed by PAIRS and SMS.

In making such appointments, consideration shall be given to achieving a balanced representation of:

- (i) physicians with expertise,
 - (ii) gender,
 - (iii) geographic location,
 - (iv) cultural identity
2. The members of the Committee shall select a chairperson for a two year term.

Goals

1. The Committee shall assist physicians whose circumstances constitute a concern for the well being of their patients, their family and/or themselves.
2. The Committee shall serve as a referral resource to physicians and their family members who are facing challenges due to physical or mental health issues, addictions, aging, family/marital issues, relationships, medical practise, financial or legal matters.
3. The Committee shall contribute to the ongoing education of the profession with respect to physician wellness.

Guidelines

A conspiracy of silence is no kindness to a struggling physician. It is essential that the process of assisting these physicians and their families be done with sensitivity. Care must be taken to use a compassionate, non-judgemental, non-punitive approach. Efforts will be made to protect the dignity and preserve the anonymity of physicians, as well as their families.

Procedures

Pursuant to its terms of reference, the Committee has adopted the following procedures:

Referral Sources

1. Physicians who are experiencing difficulties can be identified and referred by:
 - (a) self,
 - (b) family members,
 - (c) physician colleagues,
 - (d) student /resident colleagues,
 - (e) allied health personnel,
 - (f) College Physicians and Surgeons,
 - (g) College of Medicine,
 - (h) members of the public.

2. Referrals may be made to:
 - (a) the Director, Physician Support Programs at the SMA office,
 - (b) members of the Committee.

Initial Contact

1. Reasons for initiating contact with the Committee may include the obtaining of: information, education, referral and/or intervention in some form.
2. If an interview is deemed necessary, the following steps will be taken:
 - Step 1 - Two members of the Committee will meet with the physician and spouse as deemed necessary.
 - Step 2 - If the physician is receptive, an appropriate plan will be developed and as necessary, a contract to monitor progress will be entered into.
 - Step 3 - If the physician is not receptive, the Committee shall consider the acuity of the problem.
 - (a) If there is concern for the physician, but no significant concern for patient safety, the committee will continue to offer assistance in such a manner as deemed appropriate, or consider termination of contact.
 - (b) If there is concern for the physician, and the problem creates concern for patient safety, the physician will be notified that the matter will be referred to the Registrar at the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Support and Monitoring

1. When assistance is accepted, two committee members will meet with the physician and spouse as deemed appropriate to establish a plan to:
 - (a) establish goals,
 - (b) identify issues requiring support/monitoring,
 - (c) identify the support/monitoring process,
 - (d) establish a reporting structure to the committee,
 - (e) determine a reasonable end point of support/monitoring.
2. The committee member(s) directly involved with the physician and/or the family will report to the Committee on a regular basis for the duration of the monitoring process. The Committee shall:
 - (a) evaluate reports, assess progress of physicians, and make recommendations re: on-going care
 - (b) maintain a confidential file on each physician,
 - (c) report to the Registrar for possible intervention if there are concerns for patient safety
 - (d) terminate monitoring/support process as deemed appropriate.