

Enrollment is quick and easy
and available 24 hours a day,
7 days a week.

Call (800) 522-9198.

For more information about
the Intervention Program,
contact the California Board
of Registered Nursing at
brn-intervention@dca.ca.gov,
call (916) 574-7692, or visit
www.rn.ca.gov/intervention.



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WHEN CAREGIVERS NEED HELP



California Board of
Registered Nursing
Intervention
Program for
Registered Nurses



WHAT IS THE INTERVENTION PROGRAM?

The California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) offers the Intervention Program (Program) as a voluntary, nondisciplinary, rehabilitation and treatment monitoring program for registered nurses (RNs) whose ability to practice nursing safely may be impaired by a substance use disorder (SUD) or a mental illness.

THE NEED FOR INTERVENTION IS CRUCIAL

RNs are not immune to SUDs or mental illness. According to the *Journal of Nursing Regulation**, an estimated 18% of nurses experience problems with substance use. Health care professionals, including RNs, may be particularly susceptible to substance abuse due to job stresses and access to controlled substances.

“Every day, across the nation, millions of nurses experience extraordinary stress and other impacts to their mental health and well-being.”** Mental illness can be exacerbated by feeling stressed, exhausted, overwhelmed, and frustrated. This may affect an RN’s ability to practice safely.

*“The Prevalence of Substance Use and Substance Use Problems in Registered Nurses: Estimates From the Nurse Worklife and Wellness Study,” *Journal of Nursing Regulation*, January 2022.

**American Nurses Association. (2022) Supporting the mental health and resilience of nurses.

PROTECTING THE PUBLIC IS PARAMOUNT

The goal of the Program is to protect the public by:

- Promoting early identification and intervention of RNs with SUD or mental illness.
- Developing an individualized, comprehensive rehabilitation plan for RNs.
- Monitoring RNs to ensure successful rehabilitation and return to safe nursing practice.



SERVICES PROVIDED

For the public

- Education about the impact of SUDs in nursing, how to recognize the signs and symptoms of impairment, and how to intervene when an RN has an observed problem.
- Confidential consultation with concerned RNs, employers, colleagues, family members, and consumers.
- Effective monitoring as an alternative to traditional disciplinary process.
- Training and consultation with employers to assure an RN's smooth transition back to safe nursing practice.

For the RN

- Encouragement, guidance, and support by dedicated professionals.
- Confidential alternative to disciplinary action.
- Assessment of treatment needs.
- Development of an individualized rehabilitation plan.
- Referral to local support services.
- Monitoring of rehabilitation progress.
- Drug testing.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER



Behavioral

- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness.
- Increased isolation.
- Verbal or physical aggression.
- Defensiveness.

Physical

- Dilated or pin-point pupils.
- Lethargic or jittery.
- Changes in appearance.
- Slurred, rapid, or pressured speech.

Signs of impaired practice or drug diversion

- Discrepancies in medication documentation.
- Discrepancies in narcotic counts.
- Unwitnessed wastage of unused medications.
- Frequent documentation errors.
- RN asks for higher PRN doses for assigned patients.

IS THE INTERVENTION PROGRAM CONFIDENTIAL?

Yes. Confidentiality is protected by law. Once an RN enrolls, the Program maintains the confidentiality of all information gathered to develop a rehabilitation plan. When an RN successfully completes the Program, their record of participation is destroyed.

If an RN is terminated for noncompliance and is determined to be a threat to themselves or to the public, their record of participation may be turned over to BRN Enforcement Division.

IS THE INTERVENTION PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL?

Yes! More than 2,200 RNs have successfully completed the Program.

The Program's success is attributed to the commitment of RNs who choose to enter the Program as part of their recovery process. Once in the Program, they receive encouragement, support, and guidance by dedicated health professionals and vigilant monitoring for an average of three to five years.

HOW CAN RNs ENROLL?

Eligibility

RNs are eligible to enroll in the program if they:

- Are a current BRN licensee and reside in California.
- Misuse alcohol or drugs or have a mental illness.
- Voluntarily agree to enter the program.
- Consent to appropriate medical or psychiatric evaluations.
- Must not have been formally disciplined for substance abuse or mental illness by the Board.
- Must not have been terminated from any intervention program for noncompliance.

Referral

An eligible RN may request admission to the Program by contacting the Board directly for assistance due to misuse of drug/alcohol or inability to practice due to mental illness.

