



Professional Assistance Program (PAP) Handbook

(Board Approval May 19, 2023)

In dedication and memory of Dr. Earnest Airhia

(November 6, 1967 ~ April 30, 2025)

SCOPE OF WORK:

1. **Overview:** A brief introduction to the PAP program and its purpose, including its goals and objectives, the benefits of participation, and an explanation of how the program works.
2. **Eligibility:** The criteria for eligibility to participate in the program, including who can access the program, how to refer an individual to the program, and any exclusions or limitations.
3. **Services:** A description of the services provided by the program.
4. **Confidentiality:** An explanation of the confidentiality provisions of the program, including who has access to information about participants, and under what circumstances information may be shared.
5. **Expectations:** An explanation of the expectations for participants in the program, including the importance of active participation, compliance with program requirements, and the role of the participant in the success of the program.
6. **Procedures:** A detailed explanation of the procedures for accessing the program, including how to make a referral, how to contact program staff, and the steps involved in initiating services.
7. **Resources:** A list of additional resources that may be available to participants, including self-help resources, support groups, and other community resources.
8. **Appendices:** Additional materials such as sample referral forms, contact information for program staff, and any other relevant documents.

I. Overview

The Louisiana LPC Board Professional Assistance Program (PAP) monitors licensees that have been referred by the Board through confidential agreements and possibly disciplinary action. The PAP was developed to protect the consumers of counseling and therapy services in Louisiana while allowing licensed professional counselors and marriage and family therapists recovering from a substance use disorder and/or a medical, mental or physical condition to continue to practice while being closely monitored through a structured Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Although the primary purpose of the PAP is to protect the public, it also serves to provide support and accountability as best practices for participants to remain on their path to recovery.

Counselors train to provide help to others, but often fail to recognize when they need help for themselves. As skilled professionals, they need extensive, multidisciplinary evaluations and treatment programs with a professional track to provide the level of help necessary to successfully address their issues.

After completion of treatment and clearance to return to work by the PAP Committee and treatment team, the participant is allowed to practice while closely supervised. Monitoring includes, but is not limited to, frequent random drug screening, reports from employers, participation in Aftercare, verified participation in 12-step support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, and as available, facilitated professional support groups.

Statistics show the general public seeking treatment on their own for substance use disorders have relapse rates of 40%-60%*. Most of these relapses occur within the first 90 days. Persons who receive the benefit of monitoring have relapse rates of 15% **.

*<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-drug-addiction-treatment/frequently-asked-questions/how-effective-drug-addiction-treatment>.

**Based on the number of current Participants who relapsed after completion of primary treatment divided by the total number of current Participants on the last day of the year.

II. Eligibility

The board offers a professional assistance program at no cost to the participant with a goal to provide public protection while monitoring licensees that may be impaired for many reasons. Participation in the program may be required as a prerequisite to continue providing therapy to patients or as a remedial course of action by the disciplinary committee. Participation may be voluntary if the licensee is experiencing emotional instability or is experiencing substance abuse issues.

III. Services

Monitoring services are recommended by the LPC Board's Professional Assistance Program (PAP) Committee members who are members of the Licensed Professional Counselors Board. A professional evaluation conducted by a Licensed Mental Health Professional (LMHP)* is required and must be complete before the board members meet to consult with the licensee. Assurance Recovery Monitoring (ARM) is the board's contracted monitoring agency. ARM works closely with Affinity eHealth to provide each participant access to advanced technology tools to support personal compliance requirements. If it is determined by ARM and the PAP Committee of the LPC Board, you will be required to check-in using your Affinity eHealth account as determined by your Case Manager, seven (7) days a week, Monday through Sunday for your testing notification. Check-in must occur between 5:00am and 3:30pm Central Time. When you activate your account, you will be able to select a primary collection site. When you select your testing site from the Affinity eHealth Network, you are responsible for confirming the hours that the site is open and available to complete your collection that day.

Cost of the test(s) is determined by the type of panel you are required to have performed. Additionally, there will be collection fees charged which depend on the collection site you choose and whether your collection is observed. All relevant information will be made available on the collection site screen when you are selecting a site.

The services provided by Affinity eHealth will enhance your ability to maintain compliance with your testing requirements. Affinity eHealth offers extended Client Support hours from 6:30am to 8:00pm ET, Monday through Friday, and Saturday and Sunday from 9:00am to 5:00pm ET. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact Affinity eHealth at 1-877-267-4304 or you can contact ARM at 1-888-699-5689.

**An LMHP includes individuals licensed to practice independently and regulated thru the various behavioral health licensing boards: Physicians (Psychiatrists), Medical Psychologists, Licensed Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs), Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs), Licensed Addiction Counselors (LACs), Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) note: an APRN must be a nurse practitioner specialist in Adult Psychiatric & Mental Health, and Family Psychiatric & Mental Health, Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health, and Child-Adolescent Mental Health and may practice to the extent that services are within the APRN's scope of practice*

IV. Confidentiality

The board will, to the full extent permissible, under R.S. 44:4 et seq., maintain a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or consent order relating to the participant's participation in the professional assistance program as a confidential matter. The board retains the discretion to share information it deems necessary with those persons providing evaluation/assessment, therapy, treatment, supervision, monitoring or drug/alcohol testing or reports. Violation of any terms, conditions, or requirements contained in any consent order or MOU can result in a loss of the participant's license.

In accordance with board rules, a participant that relocates to another jurisdiction is required to either enroll in the other jurisdiction's professional assistance program within 5 days and have the reports required under the agreement sent to the Louisiana Professional Counselor's Board, or if the other jurisdiction has no impairment professional program, the participant will notify the licensing board of that jurisdiction that he/she is impaired and enrolled in the Louisiana PAP. Should the participant fail to adhere to this requirement, in addition to being deemed in violation of the program requirements and corresponding consent order or MOU, the participant's license will be suspended or revoked.

The participant shall notify the board office by telephone within 48 hours and in writing within five working days of any changes of the participant's home or work address, telephone number, employment status, employer and/or change in scope or nature practice. The participant may satisfy the notice requirement by telephone, leaving a voice message on the board's office voicemail at times when the office is closed. A written confirmation from the participant of the phone message is expected within five working days.

V. Expectations

The participant must submit to the board a signed agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), indicating acceptance of the required conditions of participation in the PAP as mandated by the board, along with all initial releases or authorizations for the board or its designees to obtain information concerning the participant's participation and progress in the program within 48 hours of receipt. If the MOU and supporting documentation is not returned within the outlined time frame it could impact one's ability to participate in the program.

Such agreements shall delineate requirements for release from the program, including but not limited to certification of completion by treatment providers, written evidence of full compliance with the program agreement, and written reports attesting to the participant's current mental status to be submitted by mental health professionals approved by the board. The MOU shall also state that the board may monitor the participant for up to two

years following program completion. This agreement and the required release and authorizations must be submitted prior to the issuance of any initial license or provisional license or re-issuance of a renewal of a license or provisional license.

VI. Procedures

1. An applicant or licensee is referred to the PAP by the licensure committee, discipline committee or is a self-report.
2. The participant may be required to submit to a professional assessment relative to the impairment before the committee meets with the individual. The assessment must be completed by a licensed mental health professional who is pre-approved by the board.
3. The participant may be required to submit to ongoing monitoring for a period of up to five years. The beginning date of the monitoring period will be the date upon which a consent order or memorandum of understanding is formally signed or the date of the board's official decision to require program participation.
4. During the monitoring period the licensed or provisional licensed professional counselor or licensed or provisional licensed marriage and family therapist may be required to submit to random drug and/or alcohol screenings as determined appropriate by the board, or other monitoring requirements which are pertinent and relative to the documented impairment.
 - a. The interval and timing of the required screening will be directed by Assurance Recovery Monitoring or another board approved monitoring agency that is pre-approved by the PAP Committee of the LPC Board. The monitoring agency will be considered to have been duly selected by the board as its agent for the purpose of directing the required screens.
 - b. The results and reports of the results of all screens will be submitted to the board administrator if requested by the PAP Committee. All failed screenings and non-compliant actions are reportable to the LPC Board.
5. Receipt by the board of any positive, unexplained substance abuse/drug screen or reports of non-compliance or complications relative to the impairment during the monitoring period may result in suspension, revocation, or other appropriate action pertaining to the licensed or provisional licensed professional counselor, licensed or provisional licensed marriage and family therapist's license or provisional license as determined appropriate by the board.
6. When the impairment is substance-related, the participant may be required to attend Twelve Step meetings on a regular basis as determined appropriate by the designated

licensed substance abuse professional, and as approved or required by the board, but no less than four times monthly.

- a. A pre-approved monthly log must be submitted to and received by the board's monitoring agency at least five days after the final business day of the month following completion of the required meetings. It is the participant's responsibility to ensure that these logs are properly completed and received by the designated date.
 - b. The log requires documentation of the name of the meeting chairman, and meeting dates and times.
 - c. Submission of logs will be required for at least one year of program participation but may be required for any period up to and including the entire term of monitoring as determined by the designated licensed substance abuse professional and as approved or required by the PAP Committee.
7. During the monitoring period for the participant, the participant may be required to participate in professional supervision with a board-approved and designated licensed professional counselor supervisor or licensed marriage and family therapist supervisor at a frequency determined by the board for a period up to and including the entire five-year period of monitoring.
8. The board, in addition to other conditions, may require that the participant obtain regularly scheduled therapy, at a prescribed interval.
 - a. The type and interval of therapy may be recommended by the designated pre-approved licensed professional responsible for program monitoring, as approved by the board.
 - b. The type and interval of therapy may be also required by the board independently.
 - c. The participant may choose the licensed substance abuse professional or other qualified professional to provide this therapy, subject to board approval.
9. Other requirements for participation in the program may include, but are not limited to, limitations in the scope of the participant's mental health counseling or marriage and family therapy practice, suspension of practice, or voluntary withdrawal from practice for a specific time.
10. In the event that the participant relocates to another jurisdiction, the participant will within five days of relocating be required to either enroll in the other jurisdiction's professional assistance program and have the reports required under the agreement sent to the Louisiana Professional Counselor's Board of Examiners or if the other jurisdiction has no impairment professional program, the participant will notify the licensing board of that jurisdiction that the participant is impaired and enrolled in the professional assistance program. Should the participant fail to adhere to this requirement, in addition to being deemed in violation of the program requirements and corresponding consent order or adjudication, the participant's license or provisional license will be suspended or revoked.

11. The participant shall notify the board office by telephone within 48 hours and in writing within five working days of any changes of the participant's home or work address, telephone number, employment status, employer and/or change in scope or nature practice. The participant may satisfy the notice requirement by telephone, leaving a voice message on the board's office voicemail at times when the office is closed. A written confirmation from the participant of the phone message is expected within five working days.

VII. Resources

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): NAMI is a nonprofit organization that provides support and resources for people affected by mental illness. They offer free educational programs, support groups, and helplines for individuals and families. www.nami.org or call the helpline at 1-800-950-6264

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): SAMHSA is a government agency that provides resources and information about mental health and substance abuse. They offer a national helpline, treatment locator, and online resources. www.samhsa.gov or call 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Crisis Text Line: Crisis Text Line is a nonprofit organization that provides free, confidential support via text message to people in crisis. Text HOME to 741741 to contact a crisis counselor.

Louisiana Crisis Text Line: Text REACHOUT to 741741

Suicide Help Line: 988

VIII. Appendices

Pre-approved evaluation providers

Release of Information to Assurance Recovery Monitoring

Release of Information to the LPC Board office