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Introduction

The Impaired Professional Program (IPP) monitors Social Workers referred by the LABSWE through confidential agreements and disciplinary actions. The IPP was developed to protect the consumers of Social Work services in Louisiana while allowing licensed and certified Social Workers 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 Participation Agreement. Although the primary purpose of the IPP 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.

Social Workers 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 IPP staff and treatment team, 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 and verified participation in 12-step support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

Statistics show the general public seeking treatment on their own for substance use disorders have relapse rates of 40%-60%*. Persons who receive the benefit of monitoring have relapse rates of 15%. In 2014, the Louisiana State Board of Nursing Recovering Nurse Program, the program on which the IPP is based, experienced relapse rate of less than 4%.

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

Monitoring Tools, Requirements and Helpful Tips:

Accountability:

- TIP: Keep and organize copies of all IPP documents and reports.
- <u>Communicating with the IPP Manager</u>: Once Participant activates their Affinity Account, they will have the convenience of safe, secure and documented extended-hours communication with the LABSWE-IPP Manager through the Affinity On-line System (AOS). In most circumstances, the LABSWE-IPP Manager accesses AOS several times a day. Keep in mind, the IPP has nothing to do with issues concerning licensure, reporting arrests, supervision, or the stipulations of Consent Agreements and Orders. Those issues must be dealt with directly through the LABSWE during regular business hours. Furthermore, the LABSWE maintains the master file for each Participant, so all reports and correspondence must be sent directly to the LABSWE office. The office in turn, supplies the IPP Manager with electronic and/or hard copies of all IPP related documentation as received. This means documents are not received by the IPP in 'real time', but in 'batches'. If Participant wishes to confirm the receipt of a document, they need to contact the LABSWE office directly.
- <u>Personal Recovery Calendars (Calendars)</u> are due every two (2) months and will be considered late if <u>received</u> after the tenth (10th) of the following (odd) month. Each calendar should include Participant's name, sponsor's first name and first initial of last name, telephone number, and month/year reporting. Each entry should clearly indicate the name of the group and the time it meets. The person chairing the meeting must initial the calendar for each meeting attended. Participant's sponsor must sign each calendar to verify Participant is attending the meetings as indicated. The ORIGINAL calendars are to be mailed to the LABSWE, keeping a copy for Participant's records.
 - **TIP:** Participants who have recently completed treatment are required to attend ninety (90) meetings in Ninety (90) days'.
 - If Participant is also attending Intensive Out-Patient services or Aftercare, they may choose not to attend an AA/NA on the days they attend the above, and 'double up' on an AA/NA meeting another day.

- **TIP:** Meetings must be conference approved, meaning they can be found on a AA/NA conference website. Informal meetings with sponsor, volunteering, etc., although an important part of recovery, will not count as a substitute for an AA/NA meeting.
- TIP: A 'Speakers Meeting' will not qualify as a home group.
- **TIP**: Sponsors must sign off on Calendars, as well as the person chairing for each meeting attended. If Participant chairs the meeting, have an attendee sign Calendar.
- **TIP**: Required contact with a sponsor means meeting with him or her 1:1 and checking in, having a conversation, etc., NOT just making visual contact from across a room or attending the same meeting.
- **TIP**: Recovery is what you put into it. If you want to FEEL better, attend a meeting, if you want to GET better, work the steps.
- **TIP**: When going on vacation, make arrangements with providers to make up the sessions or to agree to 'double up' on AA/NA meetings.
- *TIP*: *Keep copies of Calendars, send the originals.*
- <u>Employment and Worksite Monitor (WM)</u>: An IPP Participant may not return to professional employment on a full-time, part-time, or PRN basis until all required treatment has been successfully completed and the IPP has a "Fitness for Duty" or "Return to Work" clearance from a Board recognized Addictionist from Participant's Primary Treatment Provider (or Psychiatrist if impairment due to mental health issues). The actual return to work date will be determined by the LABSWE-IPP, not the Addictionist or Psychiatrist.

In order to return to work, an original Employer's Agreement (EA), along with a job description, must be submitted to let the Board know where Participant will work, what type of work they will do, and for whom. In order to expedite the process, Participants may send initial EAs and job descriptions through the AOS messaging system to the IPP Manager. The hard copies of EAs and job descriptions should then be sent to the LABSWE. Once the EA information is received, the Worksite Monitor (WM) is contacted by the IPP Manager to explain the IPP, confirm Participant will have proper supervision and ensure the position is appropriate. In addition, the responsibilities of reporting and frequencies will also be explained. In order to be appropriate, the WM must see Participant on a regular enough basis to be able to recognize changes in Participant's behavior, mood and/or affect which might indicate impairment. Participants must provide the employer with a copy of their Participation Agreement as well as their

Consent Agreement and Order (if applicable). Once the EA is approved, Participant will be notified by the IPP Manager.

- <u>Employer's Agreement</u> must be received and reviewed with employer by the IPP Manager <u>before</u> Participant can begin orientation or return to previous employment. Failure to obtain approval from the IPP constitutes non-compliance and may result in action against Participant's license or certification.
 - *TIP:* Bring a copy of an Employer's Agreement to each interview, as well as a copy of the PA and CA&O (as applicable).
- <u>Performance Evaluations</u> are due every two (2) months and must be <u>received</u> no later than the tenth (10th) of the following (odd) month, depending on original agreement with the IPP. It is the responsibility of Participant to:
 - Initiate the evaluation process with supervisor once the bi-monthly period has ended e.g. take a copy of the Performance Evaluation to supervisor; ensure document indicates period covered in upper right hand of first page (ie: Jan/Feb 20--, etc.); ensure days tardy or absent are completed including zeros if none.
 - Both WM and Participant must sign the evaluation, keeping a copy for both the WM and Participant's records.
 - If Participant is under supervision by an LCSW-BACS for LMSW licensure or due to stipulations of a Consent Agreement and Order, Participant must also provide supervisor a copy of each PE as they are issued.
 - **TIP:** If notified of a missing PE, Participant may submit a copy of the PE in question. It is not up to an employer to provide a copy if an original has already been sent.
- <u>Changes in Employment:</u> Participant is required to notify the IPP program in writing immediately of any change in employment status. If there is a change in a WM, have them indicate the change on the next Performance Evaluation under "Other Comments:". If Participant wishes to change departments within the same agency, a new Employer's Agreement must be submitted and approved by the IPP prior to transfer. If Participant has been terminated or has resigned, the WM is to

provide a copy of the Separation Notice and any other related documentation to the Board.

- Overtime Restrictions: When Participant has recently completed treatment, they
 may be initially restricted to working over forty (40) hours a week. This
 restriction is in place to allow time for Participant to complete treatment
 requirements and acclimate themselves to recovery.
 - **TIP:** Work your life around your program, and everything will fall into place, not your program around your life.
- <u>Practicing with Skill:</u> Participant will be required to successfully practice for a period of time prior to release. This means continual employment with satisfactory (scores of average or better) to include no write-ups or counseling for the period indicated. <u>This is one of the most important covenants of the Participation Agreement as it demonstrates Participant is able to 'Practice with Skill', a basic tenant of Social Work certification and licensure</u>. Failure to meet this stipulation may result in the extension of PA, referral to the LABSWE due to non-compliance, or disciplinary action against Participant's license.
- <u>Medication Report Forms:</u> All prescribed medications must be reported to the IPP on this form within 5-days of the date of the prescription. Participant shall employ only one of each of the following: Pharmacy, Primary Care Physician/Practitioner and Dentist throughout program participation. The Provider must be fully aware of Participant's history to include *Drug of Choice* and participation in the IPP. The IPP must have the Medication Report Form with the healthcare provider's signature, a legible name, telephone number and contact information for the provider; each medication documented must specify reason/diagnosis, dose, frequency, quantity and number of refills. Participant must ensure a Medication Report has been submitted no less than every six (6) months for on-going prescriptions. The ORIGINAL Medication Report Forms are to be mailed to the LABSWE, Participant is to keep a copy for their records.
 - If Participant is scheduled for a medical/surgical procedure, original Medication Report Forms for pre-op, intra-op (including anesthesia), post-op and any discharge medications prescribed must be obtained. Also, make arrangements to

have all discharge summaries sent to the Board. Except in a documented emergency, prior to any surgical, dental or medical procedure that may require the use of controlled substances; Participants must notify their Addictionist and IPP Manager.

- Non-narcotic alternatives should always be used whenever possible. If the need for any medication is ongoing, Participant agrees to renew verification of medication every 180-days. Prescriptions for narcotics may not be taken on an ongoing, PRN basis nor written as 'refillable'.
- **TIP:** When asking a health care professional to mail the Medication Report Form to the Board, provide them with a stamped envelope with the Board's address already completed.
- *TIP:* If Participant has an addictionist, consult with him/her PRIOR to having a prescription filled.
- **TIP:** If Participant does NOT have an addictionist, BEFORE filling the prescription:
 - Consult the 'Affinity Medication Guide 2012' (in the 'My Documents' tab in menu to left of home page of the Affinity website)
 - Consult the 'Talbot List' (located at https://www.talbottcampus/index.php/resources/medication-guide)
 - Consult a pharmacist.
- TIP: If Participant HAS to take narcotics:
 - Wait to fill the script to see if needed.
 - Fill only a few.
 - *Have someone else hold the medication.*
 - Dispose of remaining dosage with a trusted witness.
 - The prescription should not be 'PRN' or indicate refills.
- **TIP:** If a physician recommends an Over the Counter medication listed as a 'Class B Drug', include that medication on a **Medication Report**.
- **TIP:** If on a medication for a long time, be sure to submit an initial and routine Medication Report for that prescription. For example: Asthmatic or migraine medications used on an infrequent basis.
- <u>Relapse Prevention Plan</u>: The purpose of a Relapse Prevention Plan [RPP] is to prepare Participant to remain in recovery as they ease back into practice. Typically, Participant will be required to submit a RPP when they wish to return to the IPP or complete initial treatment, and at the time of exit. A RPP is a narrative which addresses plans of how to deal with potential risk and face challenges practicing as a Social Worker, including family or social situations, day-to-day stressors, and eventual exit from the program. In many ways, it is like 'telling your story'. Although there is no 'wrong' or 'right' way to

write a RPP, it should be candid, insightful and thorough. Plans should reflect where Participant is in recovery. A RPP is a 'working document' that changes as Participant progresses through stages of recovery due to personal growth, clarity and insight. The RPP presented today will be much different than one presented a year from now. Through working out a RPP, Participant should be able to recognize personal signs of relapse, and actions to take to remain in recovery. A RPP should identify support people by name who are willing to intervene if relapse should occur, and it should specify actions both Participant and others will take to interrupt relapse. An effective RPP identifies personal relapse warning signs specific to Participant. It is a tool to help Participants to plan ahead, and stay in recovery. If a RPP is not signed by the appropriate parties, or does not meet minimum requirements, it will be returned to the Participant for revision. In the interest of anonymity, sponsors are free to sign with only their first name and last initial. A RPP Minimum Data Set is available on the LABSWE website.

Sobriety:

Drug Screens: This is one of the most important covenants of the Participation 0 Agreement as it demonstrates the Participant is able to 'Practice with Safety', a basic tenant of Social Work licensure. Participant's lab account must be activated within 48hours following discharge from primary treatment to begin the drug screening process. IPP Participants must voluntarily submit to supervised, observed, random drug screens when selected. Although most screens involve a urine specimen, the program may require analysis of blood, breath, hair, nail or any other procedure as directed by the program. Participant is to call the toll free number or check the testing notification via computer or smart phone daily (7-days per week from 06:00 am – 6:00 pm). If Participant is selected to screen and fails to provide a specimen at a designated collection site, the IPP may consider the drug screen positive and may determine Participant non-compliant with their IPP agreement. Difficulties which arise from checking-in, testing or the AOS messaging process, must be dealt with through Affinity. Any inaccurate paperwork (Chain of Custody, labeling, etc.) may result in an invalid drug screen, which may be considered a positive screen. All testing performed by the lab will be at Participant's

expense. Participants may NOT test at their place of employment. It is the responsibility of IPP Participant to ensure all of the following information is understood and followed:

- a. Observed Screen: All urine specimen collections are to be observed or (negative) results will be deemed "invalid." An observed urine specimen means the collector/observer enters the restroom or facility where urination occurs with Participant (the collector/observer must be the <u>same gender</u> as Participant). If it is a multi-stall restroom, the collector/observer must enter the stall with the Participant. It is Participant's responsibility to ensure collection of the specimen is observed.
- b. <u>Hair Specimens</u>: Depending on Participant's drug history, they may be requested to provide a hair sample; it is the responsibility of Participant to make sure a specimen may be collected from some location on the body, as failure to provide a sample is the same as a positive test.
- c. Frequency of Screens: Drug screens are scheduled for a *minimum* number of times per year, not per month. Screens may be increased for missed or invalid drug screens, missed call-ins, suspicious screens, etc. If Participant misses a scheduled drug screen it may be considered a <u>positive screen</u>. It is extremely important for Participant to keep their lab account active (funded) at all times. Lack of finances does not excuse Participant from missing a scheduled drug screen.
- d. <u>Missed Check-ins and Self-Testing</u>: If a check-in is missed, it is up to Participant to make the decision to 'self-test' (an option on Affinity website). It will not completely nullify the event, but it is the best way to possibly mitigate the consequences of a missed screen. The IPP will NOT tell Participants if they have missed a drug screen and should self-test.
- *e*. <u>Test Sites</u>: When choosing tests sites, select several for back-up to include at least one near work and home, find out their hours and their site fees, as they can vary significantly.

- f. Special Tests As Affinity does not have access to where Participants work, they cannot take location into consideration when scheduling special tests. If a test is scheduled in an inconvenient location, call to arrange a closer site if possible.
- g. Chain of Custody Forms (COC): LABSWE-IPP specific Chain of Custody forms must be used. Additional forms as a backup should be requested from the drug testing company in advance; running out of COC forms may result in a missed drug screen. It is the responsibility of Participant to listen or read carefully to find out which option to mark on their COC form. Failure to write the correct option number will result in a delay of test results and additional charges may be applied by the lab for the correct option to be run. If results are considered "invalid" due to COC errors, it will be deemed a positive test. It is the responsibility of Participant to ensure the COC form is filled out completely and correctly with name, social security number, dates, signatures, authorization number and correct drug screen option number.
 - **TIP:** If using a COC from the lab, make sure it is an AFFINITY COC or the results will go to elsewhere.
- h. <u>Abnormal Creatinine/Dilute Specimens:</u> Excessive fluid intake, consuming coffee, tea, soft drinks or any other form of caffeine prior to screening will most likely result in an abnormal or dilute urine specimen. Participants must be careful to monitor their fluid intake and avoid taking diuretics prior to screening. Additional screens, medical evaluations and alternate testing such as hair, nail, or blood testing may be required if abnormal screens persist. Best Practice is to test as early as possible in the morning before consuming fluids.
- Maintenance of Abstinence: It is the responsibility of Participant to refrain from any and all substances that could cause a positive screen. Also, Participant agrees to avoid exposure to anything that could cause a positive screen. In that regard, <u>Participant</u> shall avoid such items as "hemp oil," "coca tea" and "poppy seeds" (which can be found in curry sauces, breads, salad dressings, and in or on other foods). Participant agrees not to

use ethyl alcohol in any form including "alcohol-free" wine or beer, over-the-counter drugs containing alcohol (cough syrup, Nyquil or other similar OTC drugs or supplements), mouthwash or other hygiene products containing ethanol, foods containing ethanol (desserts, vanilla extract, etc.), communion wine, sanitizing hand or body gels (Purell or other), or any other form of ethyl alcohol. Intentional use or misuse of any of these products or medications without a physician's order is a violation of the IPP Agreement. [Along with the "Affinity - Medication Guide 2012" in the 'My Documents' tab in menu to left of home page of the Affinity website, an extensive list is located at <a href="https://www.talbottcampus/index.php/resources/medication-guide/.]

- Hand Sanitizer: Routine use of hand sanitizers will not cause a positive result for alcohol or its metabolites, particularly if caution is used to prevent inhaling fumes (*keep hands away from face*). Research shows alcohol is absorbed minimally through the skin.
- Relapse: Although it is the desire of *everyone* for Participant to stay in recovery, remain abstinent and mentally healthy, both severe and persistent mental illnesses and addiction are by nature chronic diseases. Part of the function of monitoring is to identify relapse behavior and intervene as quickly as possible in order to protect the public *and* get assistance to Participant before any professional damage or injury occurs. When relapse is presented, Participants must stop the active practice of Social Work and remove themselves from the workplace. Participants are encouraged to initially notify their supervisor themselves, however, the LABSWE-IPP Manager will also contact the workplace. They are then guided to seek remedial treatment from LABSWE-IPP recognized providers. Generally speaking, as long as there are no mitigating factors such as injury to patients, lodged complaints, or prior Consent Agreement and Order stipulations: once treatment is complete and Participants are compliant, they are allowed to return to work.
 - **TIP:** Remember the Participation Agreement stipulates 'Participant must immediately notify the IPP Manager and the LABSWE of any relapse', the sooner the IPP knows there is a problem, the sooner the problem can be addressed. The later, the more likely the relapse will have been brought to the attention of the LABSWE secondary to damage or a lodged complaint, thus increasing the likelihood of impact on the ability to practice.

- **TIP:** Active Practice means ANY job that requires Social Work certification or licensure to perform; this does NOT mean not having direct patient contact. It is the responsibility of the Participant to seek a formal opinion from the LABSWE if in doubt.
- **TIP:** IF Participant remains at worksite in other position, must have supervisor submit signed job description of new position/duties indicating new responsibilities which do not require Social Work certification or licensure. The position may require review and approval by the LABSWE prior to start of the other job.
- Participant must enter a "Monitoring Interruption" (MI) via the Affinity 0 Travel: website to notify the IPP (it is not necessary to additionally call or send an email to the IPP). Participant must submit request at least two (2) weeks in advance so alternate sites may be arranged if selected to test. Once an MI is submitted, return to the MI request to see if it has been approved or if there are any additional messages from the IPP Manager. Failure to comply with travel instructions is considered non-compliance. Participants must continue to check-in daily unless traveling outside the U.S. (taking a cruise, etc.). To be exempt from checking-in, Participants must submit an itinerary prior to travel. Itineraries may be submitted through AOS messaging. For instructions on how to attach an itinerary to an AOS message, access 'My Documents', under the 'Home' menu on the Affinity Home page, and click on 'Messaging' to download the 'Quick Messaging Guide Participant Messaging. Participants may also submit a Travel Request when otherwise unable to test, such as when traveling for return visits to treatment provider, undergoing/recovering from surgery, etc. The IPP does not intend to interfere with vacation and leisure activities; however, excessive absences from testing may result in increased testing at a minimum. Travel does not exempt Participants from weekly attendance of required groups. It is up to Participant to make arrangements with their Therapist, Aftercare, etc. as to how to make up for missed meetings. Participants are also encouraged to attend AA/NA meetings while traveling.
 - **TIP**: If Participant undergoes medical treatment where they are unable to return to work afterwards, they must have their treating physician submit a Fitness for Duty to include the date they will return to work.
 - **TIP:** Remember, Participant must undergo a separate LABSWE-IPP determination of Fitness for Duty if planning to return to the workplace while taking prescribed narcotics.

IPP Emergency Preparedness Information

Inclement Weather Natural OR Man Made Disasters

- Working Overtime as part of the Disaster Team: If restricted from working overtime, Participant may work overtime during emergency preparation/during/aftermath. Please have Worksite Monitor specify the dates required to work overtime on next Performance Evaluation.
- 2) Drug Screens: Continue to check-in for daily drug screens. If Participant lives in a mandated evacuation area/affected area, the drug screen may be excused on an individual basis depending on lab availability. A hair or blood test may be required in some circumstances upon return. Also, if relocated during an evacuation, Participant will be expected to coordinate with the testing company for an alternate testing site within new locale. Participants are responsible for taking Chain of Custody forms with them during evacuation. However, those not in mandated evacuation areas or affected areas will be expected to screen as usual.
- 3) <u>Treatment/Evaluations</u>: If Participant is scheduled for an evaluation or treatment in an affected area and treatment/evaluation has to be postponed. Participant is to notify the board at <u>socialwork@labswe.org</u> If possible, give new appointment date.
- 4) <u>IOP/Aftercare Meetings</u>: Again, if Participant is in an affected area these will be excused by the provider on the monthly reports. If Participant misses usual recovery meetings, the IPP encourages attendance at extra AA/NA meetings for the next few weeks. In particular, for support and to debrief from the additional stressors of a storm or other emergency and assist in maintaining sobriety.
- 5) **<u>Reports</u>**: According to the situation, a short extension may be granted for the receipt of all reports.

Initial Referral to the IPP

As it is often said in 12-Step meetings, 'Nobody comes to their first meeting on a good day'. Most likely, a Social Worker has been referred by the LABSWE, invited to self-report by an employer or treatment provider, or has reached bottom and are desperate for help. Regardless of what brings them to the IPP, they are *welcome*. Once a potential Participant is referred by the LABSWE and contacts the IPP, the Manager will review the referral documentation and contact Participant to negotiate a time to conduct an Intake Interview. The focus at this stage is to understand what brought the Participant to the attention of the LABSWE, and whether further evaluation and/or monitoring may be necessary.

In order to help clarify what services a Participant may need and whether or not they may be a candidate for monitoring, the IPP Manager may request supportive documentation. It is in the best interest of the Participant to make all efforts to secure whatever has been requested as quickly as possible. Examples of documentation include:

- Prescription Monitoring Record [from all states of residence].
- Evidence of abstinence through Drug and Alcohol screening.
- Separation Notices or other work documentation sent directly from place of employment.
- Evaluations & Discharge Summaries sent directly from Treatment Provider(s).
- Note(s) from psychiatrist and/or therapist, to include evaluation and diagnosis.
- Criminal Background Check (if not already submitted to the LABSWE).
- Certified copies of all pending criminal arrests, convictions, probation, and parole including any pre-trial diversion programs.

Once the IPP Manager receives all requested documentation and the Intake Interview has been conducted, a Determination Letter will be compiled and sent to the Participant. The letter will provide a summary of information leading to the determination as well as an outline of any action to be taken by the Participant. The letter may also include recommendations to the LABSWE. In as much as it is possible and best practices, the individual circumstances of each participant will be taken into consideration in making recommendations.

Completion of the IPP

Approximately, one (1) month prior to Projected Release Date (PRD), Participants should submit to the LABSWE-IPP a written request for review of their file for exit. Along with their request, Participants should, as applicable, include a revised <u>Relapse Prevention Plan</u> (RPP), and a current <u>Prescription Monitoring Record</u> (PMR) form dated to cover the full length of the Participation Agreement from the time signed by Participant, to the date PMR submitted to the Pharmacy Board. The RPP should reflect the recovery practiced now, and plans to remain in recovery after release from the IPP. The PRD will concur with the date Participation Agreement was signed by the LABSWE Chairperson, unless otherwise stipulated through a Consent Agreement and Order. Once all program requirements have been met, Participant will be contacted for an Exit Interview, and receive written notification the record is closed; until this letter is received, 100% IPP compliance is required. **Termination from the IPP may also occur as a result of relapse and/or non-compliance.**

<u>Re-Entering the IPP</u>

- Prior to submitting an application, review all correspondence received from the LABSWE and the IPP. Any stipulations indicating evaluation and/or treatment must be met prior to re-entry to the IPP.
- 2) Write a letter to the LABSWE formally requesting re-entry into the IPP, explaining what has changed since last participation and how the cause of what brought Participant to the attention of the LABSWE no longer exists.
- If the nature of impairment is a Substance Use Disorder, write a Relapse Prevention Plan (RPP) using the RPP Data Set available on the LABSWE website.
- Follow the recommendations of the LABSWE as to the next steps to take in terms of submitting an application and/or contacting the IPP.
- 5) Once a potential Participant is referred by the LABSWE to contact the IPP, the same process is followed as described in the section: "Initial Referral to the IPP".