

VERMONT
PRACTITIONER
HEALTH PROGRAM



A HEALTH SERVICE OF THE
VERMONT MEDICAL SOCIETY

Help is available for physicians,
podiatrists, physician assistants,
radiology assistants and
anesthesiology assistants whose
ability to practice is impaired, or at
risk of impairment.

A confidential program designed and
administered by practitioners,
for practitioners.

Vermont Practitioner
Health Program
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PRACTITIONERS NEED NOT
SUFFER. HELP IS AVAILABLE
AND IT WORKS.

CONFIDENTIAL NUMBER:
802-223-0400

VERMONT PRACTITIONER HEALTH PROGRAM

About VPHP

The Vermont Practitioner Health Program (VPHP) is a health service of the Vermont Medical Society. Its purpose is to protect the public by early identification, treatment, and rehabilitation of individual providers of health services whose ability to practice medicine is impaired, or is at the risk of becoming impaired. From the beginning, the program has served two important purposes: assisting the Board of Medical Practice in its mission to protect the public and assisting licensees with substance use issues.

VPHP traditionally has assisted providers dealing with impairment or risk of impairment due to excessive use of drugs, including alcohol. But in 2017 Gov. Phil Scott signed Act 39, which expanded VPHP's scope to address issues caused by any factor that interferes with cognition, judgment or behavior, including behavioral health matters, organic causes of cognitive impairment, and cognitive deficits associated with the aging process.

Physicians (including M.D.s and D.O.s), podiatrists and physician assistants are eligible to participate.

Leadership

VPHP's efforts are led by a Medical Director who assesses all referred professionals and manages clinical operations. Program

Administrator Colleen Magne handles the day-to-day administrative operations. The program is also co-managed by the Case Management Team, whose members include a diverse group of physicians and podiatrists.

Referrals and Participants

Referrals come from colleagues, family members, friends, or patients, as well as self-referrals. Each referral is treated individually, in a compassionate and confidential manner.

Participation with VPHP is voluntary. VPHP will strongly urge a practitioner who is ill to obtain evaluation and treatment, and we will suggest specific treatment options. We respond to the concerns of families, colleagues, and hospitals by providing coordinated interventions and referrals to treatment.

VPHP provides ongoing, confidential support for professionals who have, or have the potential for an impaired ability to practice medicine.

Relationship with the Vermont Board of Medical Practice

VPHP is independent of the Vermont Board of Medical Practice. However, documentation of participation in and compliance with our monitoring program can be essential in helping to

restore and/or maintain licensure.

Under a protocol adopted by both the Vermont Board of Medical Practice and VMS, VPHP is not required to disclose to the Board the identity of self-referred participants except where there is injury, or the risk of injury to a patient, a criminal act, relapse to the use of alcohol or drugs, or other failures by the participant to abide by their monitoring contract with VPHP. VPHP frequently works in coordination with the Board in instances where the participant is referred by the Board.

VPHP has been established as a peer review program of the Society. Under Vermont law, peer review activities of the program are confidential.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP
YOURSELF OR A COLLEAGUE
WHOSE ABILITY TO PRACTICE
MEDICINE MIGHT BE
IMPAIRED?

If you or a colleague may have an impaired ability to practice, VPHP can be a valuable, confidential resource. The sooner a diagnosis is made and treatment is initiated, the better the prognosis. In many cases willingness to acknowledge one's own problem, or the courage to act on concerns about a colleague, leads to recovery before a practitioner's skill and medical practice are compromised.