



TITLE

**ALCOHOL AND DRUGS**

SCOPE

Provincial

DOCUMENT #

HCS-232

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

People Executive Committee

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE

March 25, 2019

SPONSOR

Workplace Health and Safety

REVISION EFFECTIVE DATE

April 1, 2020

PARENT DOCUMENT TITLE, TYPE, AND NUMBER

Not applicable

SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE

April 1, 2021

**NOTE:** The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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## OBJECTIVES

- To support the Alberta Health Services (AHS) Values by providing direction to ensure **AHS representatives** are **fit for AHS business** and safe to work.
- To communicate AHS' commitment to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all AHS representatives and provide the best patient care possible.
- To communicate AHS' expectation to AHS representatives who have been entrusted to provide care for Albertans in our **AHS settings**, that **alcohol** and/or **drugs** must not impact the safe performance of their duties.
- To support AHS representatives in the early prevention and identification of **substance use** that impacts **AHS business**.

## PRINCIPLES

- AHS recognizes that the use of alcohol and/or drugs can adversely impact AHS business. This can place the integrity, safety, and well-being of patients, AHS representatives, others, and AHS business, at risk.
- AHS representatives continuously strive to protect and promote the safety of patients, families, visitors, and other AHS representatives.
- AHS representatives shall hold themselves accountable for their own actions by not impacting AHS business through the use of alcohol and/or drugs.

## APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

## ELEMENTS

### 1. Points of Emphasis

- 1.1 This policy applies to all AHS representatives at all times when they are engaged in AHS business and in an AHS setting, including when operating AHS vehicles and equipment.
- 1.2 Accessing assistance or declaring a problem with substance use does not eliminate the requirement for maintenance of safe and acceptable performance levels and compliance with this policy.
- 1.3 AHS representatives, prior to engaging in AHS business, are required to proactively disclose the use of alcohol and/or drugs that may render them not fit for AHS business.
- 1.4 AHS respects the dignity of its AHS representatives and places a priority on treatment and recovery.

### 2. Workplace Expectations

- 2.1 To minimize the risk of unsafe and unsatisfactory performance due to the use of alcohol and/or drugs, all AHS representatives shall:
  - a) report fit for AHS business and remain fit for AHS business while on AHS business, including when operating AHS vehicles and equipment, and when on scheduled call;
  - b) immediately notify their **Manager, Supervisor**, or other appropriate leader if another AHS representative is not fit to be on AHS business;
  - c) co-operate with any investigation into a violation or suspected violation of this policy and the applicable procedure that applies to the AHS representative; and
  - d) perform AHS business in a safe manner and in all ways consistent with established policies, procedures, and practices.
- 2.2 Alcohol and Drugs:
  - a) The following are prohibited by AHS representatives while in an AHS setting or engaged in or reporting for AHS business:

- (i) the consumption, possession, distribution, offering, or sale of any product containing alcohol, drugs, and **drug paraphernalia** (see Appendix A: *Medication Guide*); and/or
  - (ii) being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- b) Exceptions to Section 2.2 a) above include the following:
- (i) the possession of alcohol and the handling of alcohol, drugs, and drug paraphernalia for health, social support, or harm reduction as required to safely perform AHS business directly related to patient care and for preapproved events in accordance with Appendix B: *Business and Social Events*;
  - (ii) the possession and handling of alcohol, drugs, and drug paraphernalia by Protective Services, a Manager, Supervisor, or other appropriate leader as it relates to the enforcement of this policy suite;
  - (iii) use of alcohol and/or **cannabis** (non-medical/recreational) when travelling for business purposes, when at a training event or seminar, or in any other similar business-related situation if the formal business has been completed and the AHS representative is not returning to AHS business;
  - (iv) alcohol and/or cannabis (non-medical/recreational) may be used responsibly and provided the AHS representative is not returning to AHS business or operating an AHS vehicle;
  - (v) if alcohol and/or cannabis (non-medical/recreational) is received as a gift, it must remain sealed and be removed from an AHS setting as soon as possible; and
  - (vi) activities outlined in business and social events, as described in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 and Appendix B: *Business and Social Events*.

2.3 Medications (refer to 'drug' in the Definitions section below):

- a) AHS recognizes that AHS representatives may have a clinical need to take prescription and non-prescription medications for their health and well-being.
  - (i) AHS representatives are required to responsibly use all prescription and non-prescription medications in accordance with an **authorized prescriber's** or manufacturer's instructions, or in the case of cannabis for medical purposes, the **medical documentation**. See Appendix A: *Medication Guide*.

- b) The following are prohibited for AHS representatives while on AHS business, and a violation of this policy:
  - (i) the use of medications that inhibit an AHS representative's ability to perform AHS business, safely and productively;
  - (ii) the possession of prescription medications which were not prescribed to them or cannabis for medical purposes without medical documentation; and
  - (iii) the unauthorized distribution, offering, or sale of medications.

#### 2.4 Scheduled On-Call Situations:

- a) AHS representatives are expected to remain fit for AHS business and in compliance with this policy when on-call.

#### 2.5 Unexpected Call-In:

- a) If unexpected circumstances arise where an off-duty AHS representative is requested to perform unscheduled AHS business, it is the responsibility of the AHS representative to:
  - (i) decline the call following the use or consumption of alcohol and/or drugs that render them not fit for AHS business.
- b) The AHS representative is not obligated to disclose the reason for declining the call.

### 3. Not Fit for AHS Business

- 3.1 When there is reason to believe an AHS representative is not fit for AHS business for reasons believed to be related to the consumption or use of alcohol and/or drugs, the AHS representative shall not be permitted to engage in AHS business (including but not limited to duties relating to patient care).
  - a) AHS will take steps to have the AHS representative taken to a safe location and not return to AHS business until deemed fit in accordance with the AHS *Alcohol and Drugs* Procedure that applies to the AHS representative.

### 4. Impaired Driving

- 4.1 It is prohibited for AHS representatives while on AHS business to engage in **impaired driving**.

### 5. Business and Social Events

- 5.1 In the case of any AHS business or social event where AHS or an AHS representative is the host, appropriate regard shall be taken for the safety and

well-being of the individuals present and the community. The requirements for business and social events are provided in Appendix B: *Business and Social Events*.

- 5.2 AHS business or social events held on or off AHS settings must adhere to the requirements in Appendix B: *Business and Social Events*.

## 6. Policy Violations

- 6.1 The following are examples of violations of the AHS *Alcohol and Drugs* Policy for all AHS representatives while on AHS business:

- a) not being fit for AHS business due to the use of alcohol and/or drugs;
- b) failure by an AHS representative to proactively disclose the use of alcohol and/or drugs that renders them not fit for AHS business;
- c) the consumption, possession, distribution, offering, or sale of any product containing alcohol, drugs, and drug paraphernalia while in an AHS setting, unless it is an exception stated in Sections 2.2(b) and 2.3(a) above;
- d) the use, consumption, possession, distribution, offering, or sale of **non-medical cannabis**, in any form;
- e) engaging in impaired driving;
- f) consuming alcohol and/or drugs (other than medication as authorized by a manufacturer or authorized prescriber) when engaged in AHS business and returning to AHS business or social events that do not meet the requirements in Appendix B: *Business and Social Events*; and
- g) any other violation listed in the applicable procedure that applies to the AHS representative.

- 6.2 Consequences of a violation shall be determined in accordance with the AHS *Alcohol and Drugs* Procedure that applies to the AHS representative.

## 7. Alcohol and Drug Testing for AHS Representatives

- 7.1 Alcohol and drug testing of AHS representatives as noted in Section 7.3 below may occur in accordance with the applicable procedure, in the following situations:

- a) **reasonable cause**;
- b) **post-incident**;
- c) prior to returning to AHS business following a violation of the AHS *Alcohol and Drugs* Policy;

- d) follow-up testing as required by an AHS representative's medical provider or professional body; and
  - e) unannounced testing as required by an AHS representative's medical provider or professional body.
- 7.2 Post-incident testing shall not be necessary if there is clear, objective evidence that the acts or omissions of an AHS representative could not have been a contributing factor to the AHS business-related incident.
- 7.3 Alcohol and drug testing shall occur for the following AHS representatives in accordance with the applicable procedure:
- a) AHS **employees** holding **risk-sensitive positions**;
  - b) AHS medical staff; and
  - c) AHS midwifery staff.

## DEFINITIONS

**Alberta Health Services (AHS) business** means all business activities undertaken in the course of operations that are conducted in an AHS setting.

**Alberta Health Services (AHS) representative** means an employee, resident physician, member of the medical or midwifery staffs, student, volunteer, contracted service provider, or other individual authorized to represent AHS.

**Alberta Health Services (AHS) setting** means, for the purposes of this policy, any environment where treatment/procedures and other health services are delivered by, on behalf of, or in conjunction with, Alberta Health Services. This includes but is not necessarily restricted to all land, facilities, affiliated sites, mobile equipment and vehicles owned, leased, or rented, and AHS corporate offices for the purpose of conducting AHS business.

**Alcohol** means a substance containing ethyl alcohol (ethanol) such as beer, wine, and distilled spirits, and includes alcohol found in medicines or other products.

**Authorized prescriber** means a health care professional who is permitted by federal and provincial legislation, their regulatory college, Alberta Health Services, and practice setting (where applicable) to prescribe medications.

**Cannabis** means the preparations and derivatives made out of the various parts of the entire cannabis plant (*Cannabis sativa* and *Cannabis indica* being the most popular varieties). Various products can be made from the parts of the entire cannabis plant including all extracts, edibles, oils, and dried flower or bud.

**Drug** means any substance, the use of which has the potential to change or adversely affect the way a person thinks, feels, or acts. For the purposes of this policy, drugs of concern are those that inhibit an individual's ability to perform AHS business safely and productively. Drug includes but is not limited to:

- Illicit drugs - any substance which is not legally obtained and whose access, use, sale, possession, purchase, or transfer is controlled, restricted, or prohibited by law (e.g., street drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine). This includes but is not restricted to medications or legal drugs obtained illegally.
- Mood-altering substances - any substance that is not alcohol, an illicit drug, or medication, whose use results in cognitive or physical limitations that do or may negatively impact AHS business. It includes (but is not limited to) any product containing cannabis including inhaled products or consumables, synthetic cannabis, “bath salts”, and doda solvents. It also includes (but is not limited to) natural products considered as alternatives to medication. It further includes (but is not limited to) substances used in a manner not intended by the manufacturer of the substance (e.g., glue sniffing, gasoline sniffing).
- Medication - any substance or mixture of substances manufactured, sold, or represented for use in the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation, or prevention of a disease, disorder, or abnormal physical state, or its symptoms, in human beings, and restoring, correcting, or modifying organic functions in human beings. For the purposes of this policy, this includes cannabis for medical purposes that is authorized in accordance with Part 14 of the *Cannabis Regulation (Canada)*.

**Drug paraphernalia** means any personal property which is associated with the use of an illicit drug, substance, chemical, or agent. This would also include any product or device that may be used to tamper with a testing sample.

**Employee** means an individual who is hired to perform work for AHS in return for wages or salary and has been assigned an AHS identification number, and includes medical residents and/or fellows who are AHS employees.

**Fit for AHS business** means being able to safely and acceptably perform assigned duties without any limitations associated with the use or after-effects of alcohol or drugs while on AHS business.

**Impaired driving** means operating or having care or control over a motor vehicle, whether it is in motion or not, when the individual is impaired by alcohol or drugs, as determined in accordance with federal or provincial legislation or when suffering the after-effects of alcohol or drugs.

**Manager** means the individual(s) who has the delegated human resources authority for directly planning, monitoring, and supervising direct (employee) reports.

**Medical documentation** means the required medical documentation pursuant to the requirements laid out in Part 14 of the *Cannabis Regulation (Canada)*

**Non-medical cannabis** means any cannabis other than cannabis authorized under Part 14 of the *Cannabis Regulation (Canada)*.

**Post-incident** means an AHS business-related adverse incident that occurred while on AHS business, including but not limited to the following:

- a) a fatality;

- b) injury to a patient, self, an AHS representative, a member of the public, or any other individual;
- c) a reportable environmental incident;
- d) significant loss or damage to property, equipment, or vehicles;
- e) a near miss for which alcohol or drugs may have been a factor; and
- f) any incident that may bring reputational harm to AHS.

**Reasonable cause** means whenever AHS has reasonable grounds to believe that the actions, appearance, or conduct of an AHS employee in a risk-sensitive position while on AHS business are indicative of the use of alcohol and/or drugs.

**Risk-sensitive positions** means those positions, as defined by AHS, which involve any work where negatively impacted performance could result in the following, including but not limited to:

- adverse effects to the health and safety of AHS representatives, contractors, and their employees;
- adverse effects to AHS patient safety and care;
- adverse effects to AHS operational performance, including and not restricted to the operation of a vehicle and/or equipment and supplies;
- damage to AHS owned or leased property or the environment; and/or
- damage to AHS' reputation or brand.

**Substance use** means consumption of alcohol and drugs for medicinal or non-medicinal purposes and may be done legally or illegally. It occurs along a continuum from experimental use to harmful use and dependence.

**Supervisor** means a person, whether unionized or non-unionized, who has charge of a work site or authority over an AHS representative.

## REFERENCES

- Appendix A: *Medication Guide*
- Appendix B: *Business and Social Events*
- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  - *Alcohol and Drugs: Employees Procedure* (#HCS-232-02)
  - *Alcohol and Drugs: Contractors, Students and Volunteers Procedure* (#HCS-232-01)
  - *Risk-Sensitive Positions Guideline* (#HCS-232-03)
  - *Recruitment and Employment Practices Policy* (#1116)
  - *Security Screening Procedure* (#1161)
  - *Tobacco and Smoke Free Environments Policy* (#1134)
  - *Travel, Hospitality, and Working Session Expenses - Approval, Reimbursement, and Disclosure Policy* (#1122)
  - *Workplace Accommodation Policy* (#1156)
- Alberta Health Services Forms:
  - *Employee Request for Accommodation* (#19566)
- Alberta Health Services Resources:
  - *Workplace Accommodation Process Guide*

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- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
  - *Cannabis Regulations (Canada)*
  - *Criminal Code (Canada)*
  - *Traffic Safety Act (Alberta)*

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## APPENDIX A

**Medication Guide**

AHS representatives shall manage potential impairment while on AHS business due to the legitimate use of medications. The following drug categories have been associated with performance impairment and are provided as a guide to AHS representatives in determining their fitness for AHS business. The list is not exhaustive.

AHS representatives are required to proactively consult with their authorized prescriber to determine if use of the medication will have any potential negative impact on AHS business by explaining their duties.

**Antihistamines** - are widely prescribed for hay fever and other allergies (e.g., Allegra, Dimetane). They are also found in many cold medications. These medications may cause drowsiness.

**Anticonvulsants** – are used to control epileptic seizures and can cause drowsiness in some patients (e.g., Dilantin).

**Barbiturates, Sedatives, Hypnotics, Tranquilizers, and Antidepressants** – are used to treat sleep disorders and depression (e.g., Ativan, Imovane, Paxil). Potential side effects may include mild sedation, hypnotic state, dizziness, or drowsiness.

**Cannabis for Medical Purposes** - has not been through Health Canada's drug review and approval process, and does not have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) or Natural Product Number (NPN). However, the *Cannabis Regulations* allow physicians to authorize use of cannabis for treatment purposes. Its use, consumed in any form and at any concentration, can cause dizziness, slow reaction time, sleepiness, a distorted sense of time, and forgetfulness.

**Cold Tablets/Cough Mixtures** - in particular, nighttime remedies can cause drowsiness (e.g., Sinutab, Contac, Triaminic, Tussionex, and preparations containing dextromethorphan (DM) or codeine).

**Motion Sickness Medications** - are used to prevent motion sickness and nausea (e.g., Gravol, Antivert). Side effects may include drowsiness.

**Muscle Relaxants** - are used to treat musculoskeletal pain. Most common side effects are sedation and drowsiness (e.g., Flexeril, Robaxial).

**Narcotics** - (e.g., Demerol, Codeine, Oxycontin and Percocet). Codeine is often found in combination drugs such as 222s or 292s or Tylenol 1,2,3s. Potential side effects may include mild sedation, hypnotic state, dizziness, or drowsiness.

**Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT)** provides methadone or Suboxone® maintenance treatment to people dependent on opioids. Patients are stabilized on methadone or Suboxone® under close medical supervision and evaluation of response to medication. The use of OAT may result in drowsiness, dizziness, and light-headedness, and may impact reaction time and cognitive functioning.

**Stimulants** - Medication used for central nervous system stimulation and for appetite suppression can produce sensations of well-being, which may have an adverse effect on judgment, mood, and behaviour (e.g. amphetamines or medications sold as "diet pills").

**APPENDIX B****Business and Social Events**

Any AHS business or social event where alcohol is served shall comply with the following guide. Events involving alcohol must have prior approval in accordance with the AHS *Delegation of Approval Authority Policy*. For expense-related requirements, refer to the AHS *Travel, Hospitality, and Working Session Expenses – Approval, Reimbursement, and Disclosure Policy* and the AHS *Delegation for Financial Commitments “Financial Authorization” Matrix*.

1. Professional/trained servers shall work at each event and/or supervise the use of untrained servers.
2. Each event shall have a designated "chief host/hostess" (with assistance from others) with responsibility for:
  - obtaining appropriate permits and ensuring all terms and conditions of the permits are upheld;
  - establishing the general tone of the event;
  - acting as the sole contact with the servers during the function regarding opening and closing times, food and beverage arrangements, etc.;
  - ensuring bars are attended at all times;
  - ensuring alcohol is not served to minors or individuals who appear to be intoxicated;
  - taking steps to prevent abusive or unsafe behaviour;
  - taking steps to prevent an apparently intoxicated attendee from driving after the function;
  - providing alternate transportation or accommodation where necessary; and
  - contacting the police if an incident occurs or an attendee disregards advice and attempts to drive in an intoxicated state.
3. In all situations, events shall be managed in a way that avoids the potential for accidents, including identifying and eliminating potentially harmful situations.
4. Responsible serving practices shall include providing food and non-alcoholic drinks, establishing a firm time to end the event, and stopping service of alcohol at least one hour prior to the event being over.
5. Any AHS business or event that results in inappropriate behaviour or risk to health and safety of attendees or the community shall result in a review and active steps to ensure safety as soon as possible and that the situation does not occur again.

6. Consistent with the above process, if alcohol is made available to AHS guests in the course of conducting business (e.g., client lunch or dinner, conference/seminar situation), employees are expected to use good judgement and be responsible if they are hosting others.