



ISNAP NEWSLETTER

October ~ 2011

Affinity Online Solutions (AOS)

Monitoring of health professionals whose practice may be compromised by a substance use disorder has been shown to improve outcomes. “Why?” Because it holds the participants accountable to accomplish certain tasks, it helps assure fitness for duty, and it allows for advocacy by documenting a solid recovery. ***If a nurse is impaired, the critical nature of a nurse’s job requires that the Indiana State Board of Nursing apply appropriate measure to ensure public safety.*** This is the reason for ISNAP. However, ISNAP has been stretched over the years with limited resources and has been looking for a more effective way to assure adequate monitoring of our nurses. The Affinity eHealth Compliance Monitoring Solution (CMS) program through Affinity Online Solutions (AOS) will help meet this need.

Most likely, you have already received a packet of information from Affinity Online Solutions (AOS). ISNAP has made a decision to work with AOS to provide comprehensive case-management services. Several states across the country use AOS to improve a nurse’s ability to maintain compliance with his/her monitoring requirements. ***A key feature of AOS is to provide an innovative random drug and alcohol testing program.*** ISNAP has worked with AOS to continue to use Witham Laboratory in Lebanon, Indiana, and their current collection sites to process the urine drug screens (UDS’s), but all communication from here on out will be through the ISNAP and AOS staff. AOS also provides alerts and notifications for your case manager on a timely basis to more effectively manage compliance and accountability. Letters were mailed out to participants the week of October 10. Participants have through the end of October to register with AOS. On November 1, the system will be live and the switch from Witham to AOS will be made. Thank you for your patience through the transition to this new management system!

RN License Renewal

By the time you receive this newsletter, most RN’s in the state of Indiana should have renewed their nursing license. It is very important that you answer all questions on the renewal application truthfully. The two questions that affect ISNAP nurses the most are:

- “Since you last renewed, ***have you been convicted of or pled guilty to a violation of a federal or state law or are criminal charges pending?***” This includes any criminal charge such as shop lifting, a DUI, or a domestic violence charge. And, secondly,
- “Since you last renewed, ***have you ever been terminated, reprimanded, disciplined, or demoted in the scope of your practice as a nurse or as another health care professional?***” This includes even a suspension during an investigation, or if you resigned in lieu of termination. If you check “yes” to any of the 5 questions, you will be scheduled for what is called a personal appearance before a member of the Indiana State Board of Nursing (ISBN). You will have to explain the reason for your “yes” answer. An ISNAP representative will be present at the appearance to testify regarding your participation in ISNAP.

The Use of Controlled Substances

By State Statute (848 IAC 7-1-3 and 7-1-6), ISNAP is an abstinence-based program. As such, the use of controlled substances must be very time-limited. ISNAP also asks that while taking the controlled substance (CS), you refrain from work. In addition, when visiting a health care practitioner (MD, DO, DD, NP), you must inform them that you are in monitoring with ISNAP. ***If there is a possibility that you may be prescribed a CS, you must bring the “Use of CS while in an RMA” form with you.*** (This can be found on ISNAP’s website under “participant info”). Before prescribing any CS, the attending practitioner must list any attempted non-narcotic alternatives that were pursued prior to prescribing a narcotic medication. You must submit any written documentation to ISNAP.

Worksite Monitoring

Identification, intervention and appropriate treatment leading to rehabilitation create a safer work environment for both our patients as well as the staff. ***It is ISNAP's primary purpose to ensure public safety.*** Indiana statutes and the State Board of Nursing direct the monitoring and facilitation of the recovery of Indiana nurses who have a DSM-IV diagnosis of substance use, abuse or dependency. ***The cardinal rule of monitoring is, therefore, workplace safety!*** Every nurse in monitoring with ISNAP must be authorized to work and identify a worksite monitor (WSM). The WSM is usually your direct supervisor. ISNAP will obtain a release of information from you to your WSM and confirm with them that you are involved in monitoring and any workplace restrictions (e.g. no access to controlled substances). ***You MUST get approval from ISNAP before beginning a new job or transferring to another job in the same facility or with the same company.*** Too often, ISNAP is informed after a nurse has already started working. Taking a job without ISNAP's approval would be considered non-compliant and could jeopardize your continued employment or affect your monitoring. Remember, you must call your case manager when you have been offered a new position. ***Often, it is very helpful to have ISNAP talk to your potential employer when they are considering you for the position.*** ISNAP can help alleviate fears that the employer may have about hiring an ISNAP nurse or hiring a nurse with a "probationary" license. The employer often asks how a probationary license might impact their ability to do the job.

National Recovery Month

September was National Recovery Month. ISNAP celebrates with our many nurses who have engaged in a healthy recovery program. ISNAP recognizes the many dedicated nurses who live out on a daily basis that treatment is effective and that nurses can and do recover from addictions. Karen Kaiser Clark, a motivation speaker, said, ***"Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely."***

ASAM Releases New Definition of Addiction

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) has released a new definition of addiction, highlighting that ***addiction is a chronic brain disorder and not simply a behavioral problem involving too much alcohol, drugs, gambling or sex.*** This is the first time ASAM has taken an official position that addiction is not solely related to problematic substance use. "At its core, addiction isn't just a social problem or a moral problem or a criminal problem. It's a brain problem whose behaviors manifest in all these other areas," said Dr. Michael Miller, past president of ASAM. "Many behaviors driven by addiction are real problems and sometimes criminal acts. ***But the disease is about brains, not drugs. It's about underlying neurology, not outward actions.***" The new definition also describes addiction as a primary disease, meaning that it's not the result of other causes such as emotional or psychiatric problems. Addiction is also recognized as a chronic disease, like cardiovascular disease or diabetes, so it must be treated, managed and monitored over a life-time. Dr. Raju Hajela, past president of the Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine, stated that "the disease creates distortions in thinking, feelings and perceptions, which drive people to behave in ways that are not understandable to others around them. ***Simply put, addiction is not a choice. Addictive behaviors are a manifestation of the disease, not a cause.***" He goes on to say that "choice still plays an important role in getting help. While the neurobiology of choice may not be fully understood, a person with addiction must make choices for a healthier life in order to enter treatment and recovery. Because there is no pill which alone can cure addiction, choosing recovery over unhealthy behaviors is necessary." Dr. Miller adds, "Many chronic diseases require behavioral choices, such as people with heart disease choosing to eat healthier or begin exercising, in addition to medical or surgical interventions. ***So we have to stop moralizing, blaming, controlling or smirking at the person with the disease of addiction,*** and start creating opportunities for individuals and families to get help and providing assistance in choosing proper treatment."

(To read ASAM's full definition of addiction, visit <http://www.asam.org/DefinitionofAddiction-LongVersion.html>).