



INSTITUTIONAL POLICY: D5050

Student Mental Health

Category: Learning Environment
Subject: Student Mental Health
Effective Date: November 1, 2024
Updated: May 15, 2015

1. Authority

COCA 5.3-2

2. Introduction

Osteopathic medical students are held to the same ethical and professional standards as osteopathic physicians. Inability to perform due to undiagnosed, untreated, or uncontrolled mental illness is unacceptable and unsafe, and cause for administrative action up to and including dismissal from the Niazee College of Osteopathic Medicine (“NCOM”). For the benefit of students and patients alike, this policy seeks to (1) promote the early detection of osteopathic medical students at risk of harm to self or others due to mental illness, so that intervention, evaluation and/or treatment may take place; and (2) provide a uniform protocol should student mental illness be suspected. In recognition of the stresses inherent in osteopathic medical education, this policy is designed to be supportive, not punitive.

3. Role of NCOM

3.1 NCOM seeks to promote student wellness by providing a mechanism conducive to early detection of potential mental health issues and providing a supportive environment in which they can be effectively avoided or addressed. NCOM encourages students to self-refer if they feel they may be suffering from a mental illness or have reason to believe they are at risk of harm to self or others. If a student fails to self-refer, NCOM has the authority and responsibility to take appropriate action.

3.2 NCOM shall ensure appropriate levels of confidentiality for a student seeking information, referral, and/or treatment unless the student is at risk of harm to self or others or refuses to comply with NCOM requirements concerning mental health.

3.3 The Dean/CAO has the authority to remove a student from any educational activities if there is evidence that (a) the student's behavior may negatively affect student academic performance or patient care, (b) the student no longer meets NCOM's Health and Technical Standards, or (c) the student is reasonably believed to be at risk of harm to self or others. Repeated violations of this policy will result in additional administrative action, up to and including dismissal.

4. Student Removal Hearing

If a student is removed from educational activities under Section 3.3 above, the student may request a hearing with the Dean/CAO within five (5) business days of their removal and may present relevant evidence concerning why they should be permitted to return to educational activities. Notwithstanding the hearing request, the student shall remain removed from educational activities until the Dean/CAO permits the student to return to educational activities. The decision of the Dean/CAO is final.

5. Mental Health Intervention

5.1 Mental health issues may include academic stress, personal issues, substance misuse, chemical dependency, and major mental illness. NCOM recognizes that mental health issues may negatively affect a student's academic performance or patient care; may preclude the student's ability to meet NCOM's Health and Technical Standards; and may put the student at risk of harm to self or others. In all cases, early recognition and prompt intervention are the most effective approaches. Students are encouraged to utilize resources identified and/or provided by NCOM.

5.2 Concerns regarding a student's mental health should be reported to the Dean/CAO.

5.3 Appropriate mental health intervention may be obtained in one of two ways:

5.3.1 **Student self-referral:** A student may self-refer to a qualified mental health provider of their choice.

5.3.2 **Administrative referral:** Whether or not a student has self-referred for mental health services, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs and/or Dean/CAO may require that the student undergo a mental health evaluation and/or treatment to assist in determining the student's ability to meet NCOM's Health and Technical Standards or whether the student may be at risk of harm to self or others.

6. Excused Absences for Mental Health Reasons

6.1 Any educational activities missed while on required leave under Section 5.3.2 above will be considered excused medical leave if the student complies with NCOM's requirements, including those mandated by the Dean/CAO, concerning the student's mental health. However, if the student fails to follow these requirements, then the absences will become unexcused absences. Excused and unexcused absences while on required leave will be in compliance with NCOM's institutional policy on attendance.

6.2 If a student self-refers under Section 5.3.1, any absences will be handled in accordance with NCOM's institutional policy on attendance.

6.3 If a mental health evaluation is required under Section 5.3.2 and before the student is allowed to return to educational activities, the following must occur:

6.3.1 The student submits a request to the Associate Dean of Academic affairs (years 1 and 2) or Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs (years 3 and 4) and Dean/CAO to return to educational activities;

6.3.2 The student requests, from the student's treating mental health provider, documentation of the mental health evaluation findings, whether the student meets NCOM's Health and Technical Standards, and any other information required by the Dean/CAO in a form acceptable to the Dean/CAO. All required information must be submitted to the Dean/CAO; and

6.3.3 If the appropriate Associate Dean and Dean/CAO determine that the documentation submitted is sufficient to decide that the student meets NCOM's Health and Technical Standards, the Dean/CAO may approve the student's request to return to educational activities.

7. Leave of Absence for Mental Health Reasons

7.1 If a student is placed on a leave of absence for mental health reasons, before the student is allowed to return to educational activities, the requirements set forth in Section 6.3 must be met.

7.2 If a student is unable to meet NCOM's Health and Technical Standards, the student should request an extension under NCOM's institutional policy on leave of absence.

7.3 Any leave of absence for mental health reasons will be in compliance with NCOM's institutional policy on leave of absence.

8. Treatment Failure or Non-Compliance

Students must comply with NCOM requirements concerning student mental health. A student may be subject to administrative action, up to and including dismissal by the Dean/CAO, if the student fails to:

8.1 Comply with NCOM requirements concerning student mental health, including NCOM's student mental health policies and procedures and any requirements mandated by the Dean/CAO;

8.2 Comply with treatment recommendations and provide all necessary documentation of compliance; or

8.3 Regain or maintain compliance with NCOM's Health and Technical Standards.

9. A list of confidential Mental health providers is attached to this policy as Appendix A

Signed by:



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Dean/CAO

Appendix A

Confidential Mental and Physical Health Resources:

1. Suicide Prevention Hotline – The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now the [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) (although the previous 1-800-273-TALK (8255) number for the Lifeline will continue to function indefinitely).
2. Crisis Text Line - Text HOME to 741741 for free, 24/7 confidential crisis support in English & Spanish. Suicide hotline for anxiety, depression, bullying.
3. [Trans Lifeline](#) – Phone support for transgender people, by transgender people available 9am-3am Central 1-877-565-8860
4. [Elevated Groups Counseling – Community Mental Health & DUI Center Chicago](#)
[10436 SW Hwy, Chicago Ridge, IL \(708\) 671-8244](#)
5. [Rincon Family Services – Website \(multiple locations\)](#)
6. [Mental Health Treatment - Haven Health Management \(multiple locations\)](#)
7. [Free Clinics in Cook, Illinois - Health Health LowCostLivin \(multiple locations\)](#)
8. [Free Dental Clinic in Cook, Illinois - Health Health LowCostLivin \(multiple locations\)](#)