

Medical Association recognize that physicians have an ethical obligation to report impaired and potentially impaired colleagues.

Q: What if a potentially impaired physician or PA is my patient?

A: You may still have an obligation to make a referral to WPHP or WMC, although your concern must reach a higher threshold. Per WAC 246-16-235, you do not have to make a report until your physician-patient poses “a clear and present danger to patients or clients.” You must weigh this obligation versus your legal obligations under HIPAA if your patient is not willing to consent to you disclosing their identity in a report to WPHP. You may always contact WPHP anonymously for guidance on whether to report a physician or PA patient.

Q: Are there situations in which I cannot fulfill my legal reporting obligation by calling WPHP instead of the WMC?

A: Yes, there are two. Any behaviors falling under the definition of sexual misconduct (WAC 246-16-100) cannot be reported to WPHP and stay confidential. These incidents must be directly reported to the Department of Health. Any situation in which there is concern for impairment and there is known patient harm stemming from the suspected impairment, a direct report to the Department of Health is required. In these situations, a report to WPHP is not a substitute for reporting to the Department of Health. WPHP will advise accordingly should such circumstances come to light during the referral process.

Q: If I need to make a report, is there any disadvantage to me or to my colleague if I call the WPHP rather than WMC?

A: No. If we feel you are not fulfilling your obligation by calling us and it is one of those rare cases in which a call to WMC or DOH is mandatory, we will explicitly clarify this for you.

To learn more about WPHP or make a referral please call us at 800-552-7236 or [visit our website](#).

Updates to CME Requirements Micah Matthews, MPA

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In response to the pandemic onset in 2020, the WMC and other stakeholders worked with the Governor’s office to develop a set of proclamations to assist the health care system in response to the novel Coronavirus. Two years on, 12 of these proclamations are in the process of being rescinded. There are numerous impacts, but specific to physicians and physician assistants, the most significant are CME attestation requirements and the renewed requirements of practice agreements. The proclamations will be rescinded on October 27, 2022. The WMC is sending out multiple communications through its media channels and this newsletter to inform practitioners of the changes. Further information may be found on our website: [Inslee announces pending rescission of Proclamation 20-32: Waivers ending, and CME requirements being reinstated](#).

With respect to CME, there will be a grace period of 12 months for those practitioners whose CME is due after October 27. For those whose due date fell during the period the proclamation was active, if you do not believe you will meet your CME requirements prior to your next due date, please reach out to Medical.Licensing@wmc.wa.gov to request a waiver or extension so that we may update your account.

