

Information on Partners Pre-Employment Drug Screening Policy for Graduate Medical Education (GME) Trainees

Rationale for pre-employment drug screening

Partners HealthCare System is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy and efficient environment that enhances the welfare of its employees, patients and visitors. For this reason, a pre-employment drug screening program has been implemented for all employees. The screening will test for illegal drugs and for legal drugs that are not being used as intended (i.e. without a prescription). A copy of the policy is appended below.

Offers of employment for professional staff, including graduate medical education (GME) trainees - recruited directly or via a national match program - are conditional and depend on successful completion of pre-employment drug screening and the credentialing process for appointment to the professional staff. Conditions of employment can be found at <https://www.partners.org/For-Medical-Professionals/Employment-Conditions.aspx>

Policy implementation for Graduate Medical Education (GME) trainees

GME trainees (i.e. residents and fellows in GME programs sponsored by Partners hospitals) who have accepted an offer or registered their final rank list prior to November 15, 2018 are exempt. All other GME trainees initiating employment at a Partners hospital on or after January 1, 2019 will be subject to the policy.

Results of previous drug screens conducted by other employers will not fulfill the Partners HealthCare policy requirement, but trainees who were tested by Partners within the past six months do not have to be re-tested. Pre-employment testing is not required for trainees transferring employment from one Partners institution to another (e.g. moving from a preliminary year to a residency, or a residency to a fellowship).

Timing and location of drug testing

Drug testing should be undertaken within two weeks of an accepted offer (or confirmation of a match) at Partners. *A delay in completing the drug testing process can prevent completion of the credentialing process in time for the GME program's start date.*

Testing can be done at:

- Partners Occupational Health sites in and around Boston (utilizing saliva testing), or
- Quest laboratories: those who live internationally or out of state will be referred to the nearest Quest Laboratory collection site for their drug screening (utilizing urine testing).

Detailed instructions about testing will be provided with other credentialing and onboarding information.

Drugs included in the screen

Testing is limited to cocaine, amphetamine, methamphetamine, PCP, opiates, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, and methadone.

Results reporting

The medical review officer will contact individuals whose test indicates the presence of one of the substances noted above, generally within 7-10 days of the testing. If there is documentation of a valid prescription, the test will be reported to Occupational Health as “negative”. A screen that indicates the presence of any drug, legal or illegal, for which the medical review officer cannot verify valid use will be reported to Occupational Health as a positive test. The medical review officer will indicate to the individual with a positive screen whether the determination is of a positive or negative test result.

Results (negative or positive) are not reported to outside agencies (state board of medicine, etc.)

If testing is refused

Candidates who refuse to participate in a drug screen or who fail to complete the screening in the necessary time frame will not be eligible for employment.

Positive tests

Candidates with a positive test can meet with Occupational Health Services to discuss any questions or concerns of a technical nature related to testing.

Candidates who wish to dispute a positive result have the right to request that the sample be tested at a second independent certified lab at their own expense. For this reason, positive samples are maintained at the lab for a period of one year.

In the case of a positive test, the hospital’s chief medical officer, chief of service, and program director, in conjunction with the vice president of Human Resources, will determine on a case-by-case basis whether additional circumstances need to be considered.

Questions?

Questions about the mechanics of testing or obtaining results can be directed to Partners Occupational Health: phsocchealth@partners.org

Other questions can be directed to the Partners GME Office: Alicja Martins (amartins@partners.org) can triage to the appropriate person depending on the nature of the question.
