

**VA/DoD CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE FOR MANAGEMENT
OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS (SUD) – PRIMARY CARE KEY POINTS**

ASSESSMENT

- Use a standardized alcohol screening procedure (e.g., the CAGE or AUDIT).
- Arrange detoxification or stabilization, if indicated.
- Identify patients with *hazardous substance use* who should receive a brief intervention.
- Identify patients with *substance abuse or dependence* who require a referral to specialty care.

BRIEF INTERVENTION

- Give feedback about screening results and health risks.
- Inform about safer consumption limits.
- Assess readiness for change.
- Negotiate goals and strategies for change.
- If unsuccessful, consider referral to specialty care.

**DoD active duty are
required to be referred to
specialty care for any
incident suspected to
involve substance use.**

REFERRAL TO SPECIALTY CARE

- Referral to specialty care is clinically indicated for substance dependence.
- Help overcome barriers to successful referral.

CARE MANAGEMENT

- Document *specific* substance use at each contact by patient report (e.g., number of drinking or substance-using days in the past month, typical and maximum number of drinks per occasion).
- Monitor and discuss biological indicators (e.g., transaminase levels and urine toxicology).
- Encourage reduction or cessation of use at each visit and support motivation to change.
- Recommend self-help groups.
- Address or refer for social, financial, and housing problems.
- Coordinate treatment with other care providers.
- Monitor progress and periodically assess for possible referral to specialty care rehabilitation.

FOLLOW-UP

- Monitor substance use and encourage continued reduction or abstinence.
- Educate about substance use and associated problems.
- For DoD active duty, keep the commanding officer informed of progress, or lack thereof.

DOD ACTIVE DUTY ARE REQUIRED TO BE REFERRED TO SPECIALTY CARE FOR ANY INCIDENT SUSPECTED TO INVOLVE SUBSTANCE USE.

VA access to guidelines: <http://www.oqp.med.va.gov/cpg>

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DoD access to guidelines: <http://www.cs.amedd.army.mil/Qmo>

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