



2021 NEWSLETTER



### *Within These Pages*

- 02** An Introduction to OPHP
- 02** COVID-19 Wellness Survey Initial Findings
- 03** "How Recovery Changed my Life"  
From an OPHP Participant
- 04** Can a Healthcare Professional Seek Confidential Help for a Substance Use Disorder?

130 E. Chestnut Street, Suite 400  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Phone: (614) 841-9690  
info@ophp.org - www.ophp.org

 Ohio PHP |  @OhioPHP  
 Ohio Physicians Health Program

# An Introduction to OPHP

*Our Mission: To facilitate the health and wellness of healthcare professionals in order to enhance patient care and safety.*

## Confidential Resource

OPHP serves as a confidential resource that assists with identification, intervention, and referral for assessment or treatment of physicians and other healthcare professionals who may be affected by mental, emotional and behavioral illness, substance-related and addiction disorders, or other issues.

## Monitoring and Advocacy

OPHP specializes in providing confidential oversight for substance use disorders to qualifying physicians and other healthcare professionals. OPHP is also the Medical Board's monitoring organization authorized to conduct Ohio's One-Bite Program. *For more information on Ohio's One-Bite Program, flip to page 4*

## Educational Outreach

OPHP provides educational presentations to individuals or groups throughout Ohio. Presentations are delivered on mental, emotional and behavioral illness, and substance-related and addictive disorders, stress, burnout, and suicide; statutory guidelines for medical professionals seeking treatment.

## OPHP'S WELLNESS SURVEY RECEIVES OVER 13,000 RESPONSES

In August 2021, OPHP sent out a comprehensive survey to ALL of Ohio's healthcare professionals about the impact COVID-19 has had on their mental health and well-being. This survey used a professional assessment tool to evaluate lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and identify possible solutions to help our healthcare professionals in the future. Through this research, OPHP will better understand what best practices, tools, and resources are required to support front line workers.

*IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT OPHP'S WELL-BEING SURVEY, PLEASE REACH OUT TO US AT [STHOMPSON@OPHP.ORG](mailto:STHOMPSON@OPHP.ORG).*

At the conclusion of the survey, OPHP received over 13,000 responses from healthcare workers of all kinds. Our partner, Mighty Crow, is still working on the outcomes of the survey but our preliminary results show an immense need for healthcare professionals to have better access to support. The number of Healthcare Professionals who said they were feeling down, depressed, or hopeless EVERYDAY increased 702% from before the Covid-19 pandemic to during.

OPHP hopes this survey will act as a platform to begin the crucial conversations around "helping the helpers."

Keep an eye out for full survey results later this year!

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# HOW RECOVERY CHANGED MY LIFE

From an OPHP Participant

I first learned about OPHP through my medical school administration and mentors. It had become apparent I couldn't continue on with my career living the same way I had tried to throughout it to that point. I was motivated to reach out for help because of the very real consequences of my actions, and wanting badly to be the physician, significant other, son, and community member I knew I could be. *[How did OPHP help you in your recovery journey?]* They were supportive from day one. Checking in regularly, helping me hold myself accountable. They gave me a chance that I didn't know I deserved at the time. I have much gratitude for the program.

Today, recovery means another chance at my dream, it means forgiveness, it means freedom, it is what I owe my blessings to. Recovery has completely changed the trajectory of my life. *[Do you think recovery has enhanced your patient care?]* It has made me a listener, a better caregiver and all around a better physician.

*[What do you find most challenging about addiction and mental health disorders among healthcare professionals?]* The stigma is still strong, ego plays a large part for me and I'm sure many of those with professional degrees. The silence about this issue in a competitive, challenging profession where you are asked/expected to work hard without any hesitation is isolating. *[The interest in mental health, burnout and substance use disorders among healthcare professionals seems to be growing. Why do you think that is?]* People are finally speaking out against the silence. It takes strong people to make it through these issues, and even stronger ones to speak up to help those who suffer in silence. I think healthcare professionals are an amazing group of people, within that are these heroes doing this work.

*[If you could give advice to another healthcare professional who is struggling with a mental health or substance use disorder, what would you tell them?]* You are not alone, you are strong, you DESERVE a healthy and happy life.



# CAN A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL SEEK CONFIDENTIAL HELP?

## ***Can a physician seek confidential help for a substance use disorder?***

Yes, The Ohio General Assembly established a program that allows an eligible practitioner who is impaired due to a substance use disorder to avoid formal disciplinary action by the State Medical Board of Ohio (SMBO) by utilizing established confidential monitoring and treatment conditions as defined in Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 4731.251 and 4731.252 - this is known as the One-Bite Program.

## ***What is the One-Bite Program?***

The One-Bite Program is available for all individuals licensed by the SMBO: Physicians (M.D./D.O./D.P.M.), Physician Assistants, Anesthesiologist Assistants, Acupuncturists, Dietitians, Genetic Counselors, Radiologist Assistant, Respiratory Care Professionals, and Massage Therapists.

## ***Who is eligible to enter the One-Bite Program?***

An SMBO licensed practitioner who has been diagnosed with a substance use disorder. The practitioner has not participated previously in the program. The practitioner has not been sanctioned previously by the SMBO for impairment (unless the SMBO referred the practitioner to the program).



***Will the State Medical Board of Ohio know of my One-Bite Program participation?***

No. OPHP shall not disclose to the SMBO the name or any records relating to a participant under the One-Bite Program unless certain conditions exist and in accordance with ORC 4731.251(D).

***What treatment options do I have and how long will I be in treatment?***

In order to enter the One-Bite Program, a practitioner must complete a 72-hour comprehensive evaluation at an approved One-Bite Program treatment provider; complete treatment as recommended at an approved One-Bite Program treatment provider; and enter into a continuing care agreement with a One-Bite Program approved continuing care provider. Continuing care shall occur weekly for a minimum of six months.

***How do I access or enter the One-Bite Program?***

The Ohio Physicians Health Program (OPHP) is approved by the State to serve as the monitoring organization responsible for determining whether a practitioner is eligible to participate in the One-Bite Program and for conducting the One-Bite Program. Contact OPHP at (614) 841-9690 or at [info@ophp.org](mailto:info@ophp.org) to start the enrollment process.

***If I am concerned that a friend or colleague is impaired, who do I call?***

Call OPHP today at (614) 841-9690.



For more information visit  
[www.ophp.org](http://www.ophp.org)

# WHAT IF I AM NOT A PHYSICIAN?

## For Dentists

While no formal one-bite rule is written for those professionals licensed under the Ohio State Dental Board, a reporting exception is honored by the Board. This occurs so long as the dentist has completed treatment with a Board approved treatment provider and maintained uninterrupted sobriety. In addition, the dentist must adhere to all other statutory requirements (and complete 52 sessions of aftercare at an approved treatment provider). To be eligible for the confidential program with the Ohio State Dental Board, monitoring is required to be established with OPHP to document sobriety to support the dentist's continuation in or the return to dental practice.

## For Chiropractors

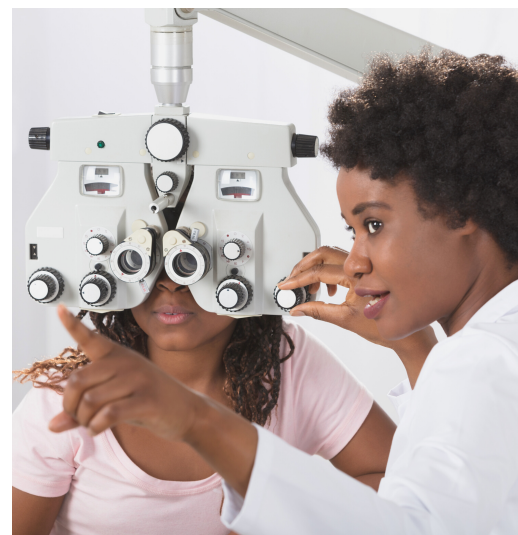
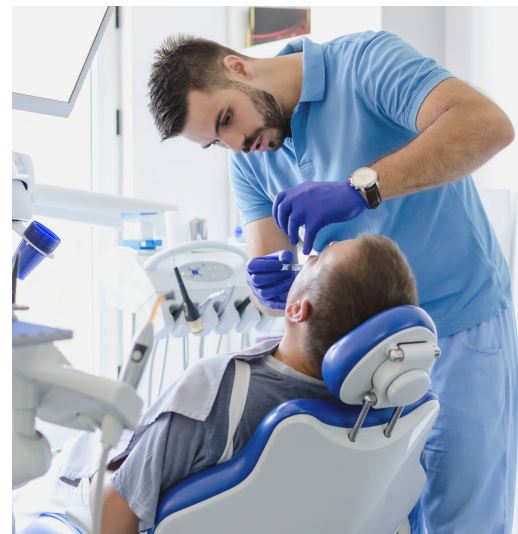
A chiropractor is not required to be reported to the OSCB so long as they are participating in treatment or aftercare for substance abuse as long as he/she maintains participation in accordance with requirements of section 4734.40 of the Ohio Revised Code. The Ohio Physicians Health Program can provide monitoring services to assist with navigating a practitioner through the rules to ensure he/she meets these requirements.

## For Optometrist

Under a Board Policy Statement, the Ohio State Board of Optometry established a "one bite" exception whereby an impaired optometrist may preclude Board intervention, and the optometrist's colleagues may be excused from reporting the impairment, so long as the optometrist has completed treatment at a facility approved by the Board, maintains uninterrupted sobriety, and enters into a monitoring agreement with the Ohio Physicians Health Program or other Board approved program. In addition, the optometrist must adhere to all other statutory requirements. When the Ohio State Board of Optometry was consolidated with other Boards, now known as the Ohio Vision Professionals Board, this policy continues to be honored.

## For Veterinarians

The Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board honors treatment in lieu of disciplinary action for any professional licensed under their Board so long as they are referred to OPHP. OPHP will refer out for appropriate evaluation and treatment at a facility that specializes in evaluating and treating healthcare professionals with substance-related and addictive disorders. To be eligible for this non-disciplinary process by the Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board, monitoring is required to be established with OPHP to document sobriety to support the veterinarian's continuation in or the return to practice.





*For more information  
about how OPHP can  
help you or a colleague,  
call one of our  
compassionate and  
understanding team  
members today at:*

*(614) 841-9690*



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# OhioPHP

Supporting Ohio's Healthcare Professionals since 1995