

Weill Cornell Medicine
Interim Policy on the Use of Drugs and Alcohol

Effective September 23, 2024

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Overview

This policy outlines Weill Cornell Medical College's policy concerning the use of drugs and alcohol. The Medical College and members of the institution, including faculty, staff, students, and volunteers, are subject to federal, state, and local laws regarding the use of alcohol and controlled substances (illicit drugs). These laws prohibit the illegal possession, use, and distribution of alcohol and controlled substances, as explained further below. They also impose certain obligations on institutions that receive public support, like the Medical College. This policy is intended to ensure the Medical College's compliance with applicable laws concerning alcohol and controlled substances and to foster a safe, healthy, and collegial environment.

Purpose of the Policy, and to Whom It Applies

The Medical College recognizes and complies with federal, state, and local laws to prevent the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of alcohol and illicit drugs by all students, faculty, and staff, and volunteers on the Medical College's premises and as part of any of its activities and events. All employees, students, volunteers, and visitors must adhere to this policy. The Medical College recognizes that substance abuse is detrimental to an individual's health and may jeopardize an individual's health and safety.

General Guidelines

- The deans of the graduate and medical schools have the responsibility of enforcing and implementing this policy within each school. Department chairs, department heads, Chief Administrative Officers (CAO), and Department Administrators (DAs) have the responsibility for enforcing and implementing this policy with regard to employees.
- The policy sets forth requirements and regulations regarding the possession, consumption, use, and distribution of alcoholic beverages and illegal controlled substances.
- The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance by any member of the Weill Cornell Medical College community, including employees, faculty members, students, volunteers, and visitors, is prohibited at all workplaces and facilities of the Medical College (including residences), and at all of its activities and events.
- The Medical College will not condone criminal conduct on its premises or at its activities or events and will take appropriate action whenever such conduct is discovered to enforce this policy and laws on drug and alcohol use.
- Violators of federal and state laws may also be referred to authorities for possible prosecution.

Federal law requires the Medical College, as a federal grant recipient and contractor, to certify that it will provide a drug-free workplace by, among other actions, publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the grantee's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violations of the prohibition, and by requiring that each person engaged in a federal grant or contract (including personnel and consultants) be given a copy of such a statement.

- Every employee of Weill Cornell Medical College who is engaged in work funded in whole or part by a federal grant, such as a grant by the National Institutes of Health ("NIH") to fund research activities, must abide by this policy and should obtain a copy of this policy from the [College-wide policy on drugs and alcohol policy misuse](#).

While certain provisions of laws concerning the use of alcohol and controlled substances are summarized in this policy, it is the responsibility of each member of the Medical College's community to familiarize themselves with laws on drug use and alcohol abuse and ensure compliance with the law.

- Appropriate action including suspension, termination, and/or dismissal will be taken for actions that violate this policy or laws concerning drugs and alcohol.
- Notably, because there are professionalism requirements outlined in the student handbooks, repeated occurrences of violation of this policy will warrant conduct review under the appropriate student standards of conduct procedures.
- Students, faculty and staff are expected to adhere to principles of professional and personal responsibility. Informed choices must be made around alcohol and drug use, and students, faculty and staff must educate themselves about the health risks, social and psychological consequences of excessive drinking and drug use.

Health Risks of Alcohol Abuse and Drug Use

Alcohol abuse and the use of illegal drugs and substances do not only implicate criminal laws. They also pose a threat to health and safety of the user or abuser and others. The following list illustrates some of the potential health risks:

- **Opiates (heroin, morphine, etc.):** Impaired driving, drowsiness, sedation, dizziness, increased heart rate, blood pressure, tremors, seizures, and, in high doses, possible death. The use of opiates during pregnancy can harm the developing fetus and cause a higher risk of premature birth, miscarriage, stillbirth, intellectual disability, impaired coordination, infection, and severe infant withdrawal symptoms.
- **Stimulants (cocaine, methamphetamine or meth, etc.):** Cocaine and its derivative, Crack, are addictive drugs of abuse. Stimulants cause increased pulse rate, blood pressure, and body temperature, insomnia, agitation, confusion, and, in high doses, possible death. The use of stimulants during pregnancy can cause damage to the developing fetus, including abnormalities of the brain, eyes, palate,

heart, urogenital organs, and liver.

- **Marijuana/Cannabis:** Disorientated behavior, fatigue, paranoia, possible psychosis. The effects of marijuana use in pregnancy are not fully known. Animal studies suggest a higher risk for miscarriage, premature birth, lower weight, and birth defects.
- **Club Drugs:** (Ecstasy, Rohypnol, GHB and Ketamine): Drugs used in nightclubs, bars, and party scenes that seemingly increases stamina and gives intoxicating highs. Critical parts of the brain from use of these drugs change and in high doses most of these drugs cause a sharp increase in body temperature, leading to muscle breakdown and kidney and cardiovascular system failure.
- **Depressants:** Common names: blues (amobarbital); yellow jackets (pentobarbital); purple hearts (phenobarbital); reds (secobarbital); rainbows (secobarbital-amobarbital combinations), and Central Nervous System depressants can be divided into two groups: barbiturates (identified above) and benzodiazepines (such as diazepam (Valium), chlordiazepoxide HCl (Librium), alprazolam (Xanax), triazolam (Halcion), and estazolam (ProSom)). The short-term effects of these drugs are depressed central nervous system, with impaired coordination, impaired judgment and short-term memory, impaired driving, reduced anxiety, and lethargy. These drugs can control seizures and high doses can cause irregular breathing, impaired reflexes, coma, and death. The long-term effects include disturbed sleep, chronic fatigue, anxiety, restlessness, depression, slower reflexes, impaired coordination, reduced sex drive, impotence, menstrual irregularities, hostility, mood swings and cross-tolerance to other depressants. The effects when used during pregnancy can harm the developing fetus causing physical dependence at birth, possible birth defects, such as cleft lip and palate, growth deficiencies, and heart defects. Importantly, these drugs can cause both physical and psychological dependency.
- **Alcohol:** The short-term effects of alcohol use may include impeded attention and memory; impaired judgment, vision, and other senses and coordination; irregular or poor sleep; and impaired driving, and in high doses alcohol use can result in unconsciousness and possible death. The long-term effects of heavy alcohol use may include damage to the liver, heart, and pancreas; irritation of the gastrointestinal system; high blood pressure; oral cancer or other cancers; malnutrition and nutritional deficiencies; and a lowered resistance to disease. Pregnant women who drink alcohol during pregnancy risk giving birth to infants with fetal alcohol syndrome (permanent organ damage, intellectual disability, heart defects, behavioral problems, facial and/or limb irregularities, etc.).

While it is difficult to predict for any one individual how many drinks are too much after two, three, or four drinks, and with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.05 to 0.08 percent, a person's senses and judgment can become impaired. This impairment may affect their coordination, balance, and reaction time. BAC is determined by four factors:

1. Quantity of alcohol consumed
2. Body weight
3. How quickly alcoholic drinks are consumed
4. Food eaten

There is just as much alcohol in an average beer as there is in the average drink of whiskey or wine.

- *1.5 ounces of 86 proof liquor = 12 ounces of beer = 5 ounces of wine (12%)*

Legal Sanctions - Possession and Use of Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

The Medical College prohibits the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages by those under the age of 21. New York State Law and this Medical College policy prohibit the sale, giving and serving of alcoholic beverages to any person under the age of 21. Under the Medical College policy, this prohibition also extends to guests of persons under the age of 21, even if the guest is over the age of 21, or to anyone who is visibly intoxicated. Alcohol may be purchased, possessed, or consumed only by individuals who have attained the age of 21.

It is illegal, and prohibited by the Medical College, for any physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner or other healthcare provider to practice medicine when impaired by alcohol or drugs, or for any physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner or other healthcare provider practicing medicine to be a habitual alcohol abuser or drug abuser.

It is illegal, and prohibited by the Medical College, for an individual to manufacture, possess, use, dispense, sell, or distribute controlled substances or other illegal drugs (as defined by state and federal law).

A federal statute and federal regulations explain what drugs are considered "controlled substances." "Controlled substances" includes, among other things, opiates such as heroin and fentanyl, hallucinogens, cocaine, barbituric acid, anabolic steroids, and narcotic drugs.

Although personal marijuana use is now permitted under New York State law for both medical and recreational uses, and federal policies or practices may make it unlikely that the possession of marijuana for personal use in states where it is legal will be prosecuted under federal law, the possession or distribution of marijuana remains illegal under federal law and there are no exceptions for medical or recreational use. The use or possession of marijuana is prohibited on the Medical College's premises.

Student consumption of alcoholic beverages in common areas on Medical College campus is prohibited (lounges, lobbies, classrooms, laboratories, etc.) regardless of age, except in the context of an approved or Medical College-sponsored events or in locations where alcohol possession and use is specifically permitted.

False Identification:

It is illegal, and prohibited by the Medical College, for an individual to present any identification or evidence of age that is false, fraudulent, or not actually his or her own, for any

purpose including that of obtaining or attempting to obtain an alcoholic beverage or controlled substance. Also prohibited is the presentation of such evidence for the purposes of being served an alcoholic beverage on campus or at any other Medical College event.

Use of Alcohol at Events

Weill Cornell Medical College expects those who plan to use alcohol as part of their activities to do so responsibly and lawfully. While there are separate guidelines for Students and Employees (including Faculty), there are also events where both groups are present. In such mixed settings, the rules governing [students] shall apply to all those present.

Griffis Faculty Club is the exclusive catering provider for all campus events where alcohol will be served. Where food at a campus event is not exclusively catered by Griffis Faculty Club and alcohol will be served, a bartender from Griffis Faculty Club must be present to track and monitor alcohol consumption of attendees.

Event organizers must fully understand and acknowledge the Medical College alcohol policy and applicable laws and manage their events accordingly. They also are expected to keep the safety and well-being of participants at the forefront of their planning and management of events. All student organizations wishing to have alcoholic beverages served at an on-campus event must use Griffis Faculty Club's catering services.

New York Law prohibits bringing your own alcohol to any public establishment that does not possess a valid liquor license. Further, Griffis Faculty Club does not allow "BYOB", also known as bring-your-own-bottle/alcohol.

General Procedures

- Application for approval of events where alcohol is served must be made by an appropriately authorized representative of the sponsoring department (i.e., chair, department head, CAO, or DA) or student group (i.e., designated representative from medical school or graduate school). **See form here:** <https://eventservices.weill.cornell.edu/services>.
- When alcohol is served, alcohol-free drinks, as well as foods and snacks that contain protein and fat must be available. Salty foods and snacks should be avoided as they encourage more drinking. Food, snacks and non-alcoholic beverages must be provided in sufficient quantity, variety, and abundance commensurate with the availability of alcoholic beverages.
- Consumption of alcohol may not be the sole focus of any event.
- Alcohol may not be consumed outdoors on Medical College property except at a registered and approved event.
- There may be no games of chance, drinking games, contests, "happy hours," or other activities that induce, encourage, or result in the consumption of alcohol.
- Only one drink at a time may be dispensed to each person. Only one drink per hour may be consumed at student events.
- Kegs or other bulk containers of alcoholic beverages are permitted only in connection

with registered and approved events, and all such containers must be closed or untapped at the conclusion of the event and removed from the premises as soon as is practicable. The possession, use, or storage of such containers is otherwise prohibited.

- Those who serve alcohol and those who check proof of age for any event may not consume alcohol during that event. Prior to the event, the sponsoring organization must designate an additional non-drinking individual who will be present during the event to assist in its management.
- If someone drinks too much, the host/sponsor must ensure that person is removed from the event and takes reasonable measures to ensure their safety.

Alcohol in WCM Housing

- Consumption of alcohol in WCM Housing is additionally limited by these requirements:
 - No registered student events involving alcohol can be permitted in the common areas of any campus housing.
 - Alcohol may be consumed **in WCM Housing in the contractually assigned private room, in the common area(s) within a contractually assigned suite or at a registered and approved event.**
 - While the individual student or host has primary responsibility for abiding by this policy and New York State law, a Griffis bartender must be in attendance.

Alcohol on Premise in Departments

- To reduce liability, it is recommended that departments do not maintain or store alcohol in their department refrigerators for indiscriminate use by members of their department. Events with alcohol hosted within a department must be approved by the department or unit head and the department head or unit head must consult with Griffis Faculty Club to comply with requirements for events with alcohol on-campus, when there will be a substantial number of attendees, i.e., more than 25 attendees.

Events Offsite

For students: the deans of the graduate and medical schools must approve any student-sponsored offsite event where alcohol will be served.

For employees: the department chairs, department heads, Chief Administrative Officers (CAO), and Department Administrators (DAs) must approve any offsite event where alcohol will be served.

All off campus events involving alcohol must submit an **offsite event form** <https://eventservices.weill.cornell.edu/services> at least two weeks prior to the event.

If alcohol will be served at a campus-sponsored event offsite, the location or vendor must comply with the Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) laws as set forth on the New York State Liquor Authority website <https://sla.ny.gov/>. The location or vendor selected must also comply with the terms and conditions of the offsite event approval, which are currently as follows:

1. No person shall sell, deliver, or give away or cause or permit or procure to be sold, delivered, or given away any alcoholic beverages to any person, actually or apparently under the age of twenty-one years.
2. No child, actually or apparently under the age of 16 years will be admitted to the premises at which event is held unless accompanied by their parent or guardian or by an adult person authorized by its parent or guardian.
3. The sponsoring department or group must designate at least two event managers, who are required to monitor attendees and ensure that excessive drinking does not occur.
4. There shall be no bar-hopping event sponsored by any authorized WCM official.
5. The deans of the graduate or medical schools, department chairs, department heads, CAOs or DAs may approve or deny all requests for offsite events. Factors to be considered will include the:
 - Type of establishment
 - Timing of event
 - Historical data
 - Intended audience
 - Designation of event managers

Advertisements and Promotion

No Medical College event shall advertise any function as a drinking event. Marketing or advertisement of alcohol or alcohol-related activities on campus or in any Medical College publication is prohibited without express approval by the department chair or department head and Dean of the graduate school or Senior Associate Dean of Medical Education where students will be in attendance.

All publicity planned to be distributed for student-sponsored events involving the service of alcohol must be approved in advance by the authorized designee and Director of Risk Management. Please review [information on reserving space and meeting guidelines](#). If a student group indicates they are planning to serve alcohol, they will be sent the *Request to Serve Alcohol at an On-Campus Event* form.

Pre-Employment Drug Toxicology Screen

All newly hired Weill Cornell Medical College employees are subject to a medical examination as a condition of employment. Individuals who have been offered a position with the Medical College that requires contact with patients or who are physically located in NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital space subject to Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care

Organizations (JCAHO) audit must take and pass a pre-employment drug toxicology screen prior to starting work at the Medical College. The drug screen will test for use of “drugs of abuse.” Drugs of abuse are considered to be illegal drugs or the inappropriate use of legal drugs. These drugs include but are not limited to:

- Amphetamines
- Barbiturates
- Benzodiazepines
- Cocaine
- Opiates
- Phencyclidine (pcp)
- Methadone
- Propoxyphone (Darvon)

During the pre-employment physical conducted by medical staff of NYP Workforce Health and Safety (WHS), the new employee will be required to give a urine sample that will be screened for the presence of drugs of abuse. Failure to complete the drug screen in the manner prescribed by OHS will result in the individual not being permitted to continue the employment process.

Employees who test positive for a drug of abuse according to OHS toxicology screening practices will not be permitted to continue the employment process.

It will be the responsibility of the department administrator or department chair/head to designate to the Department of Human Resources which positions have patient contact or will be physically located in NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital space subject to JCAHO audit, necessitating the employment drug screen. The designation shall be made on the employment requisition form for all new hires, including temporary employees on the Medical College payroll.

Disciplinary Action by Weill Cornell Medical College:

Violations of this policy or any drug or alcohol law can result in sanctions such as probation, suspension, dismissal, termination, or expulsion. The Medical College's response and sanctions may vary in accordance with the unique circumstances of each case including considerations of the nature of the substance involved, the amount of alcohol/substance involved, the disruption to the community, the actual or potential risk to the community associate with the incident, the cooperation of the individual, and for students specifically, the conduct record of the student.

For students: Student violators can be subject to disciplinary action including written warning, voluntary referral for counseling or education, probation, removal from campus housing, suspension, or dismissal through the standards of conduct policies for each program. Any drug or alcohol abuse violation may become part of a student's permanent record and may impact on a student's fitness or suitability for academic advancement.

For employees: Faculty and non-academic staff can be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and termination of employment through the Human Resources

policies and any relevant Academic Staff Handbook policies.

Legal Sanctions Under Federal, State, or Local Laws:

Those who violate laws concerning drugs and alcohol may be subject to criminal penalties such as fines, fees, and/or imprisonment. The severity of the penalty may vary depending upon the nature of the criminal act and the type and amount of the drug involved. Examples of such penalties include the following:

- **LSD, Other Hallucinogens** – The possession or sale of LSD or other hallucinogens is illegal under state and federal law and violators may be subject to fines and jail time, up to a maximum of life in prison. Possession of any amount of LSD can result in a prison sentence. Penalties increase with the amount of LSD possessed or sold. For example, possession of 25 mg of LSD can result in a prison sentence of eight years four months under New York law.
- **Marijuana** – Although personal marijuana use is now permitted under New York State law for both medical and recreational uses, and federal policies or practices may make it unlikely that the possession of marijuana for personal use in states where it is legal will be prosecuted under federal law, the possession or distribution of marijuana remains illegal under federal law and there are no exceptions for medical or recreational use. Simple possession with no intent to distribute is a misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in prison and a fine of up to \$1,000. The sale of marijuana of under 50 kg can result in a prison sentence of up to 5 years and up to \$250,000 in fines. Subsequent offenses may result in greater penalties, and penalties may increase with the amount possessed or sold.
- **Cocaine** – The possession or sale of cocaine is illegal under state and federal law. Possession of any amount of cocaine can result in a prison sentence. For example, possession of 500 mg can result in a prison sentence of seven years under New York law.
- **Alcohol** – Those who violate laws concerning alcohol use by minors or alcohol abuse may be subject to various penalties.
 - It is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to possess alcohol with the intent to consume. A first violation can result in up to a \$50 fine, an order to complete an alcohol awareness program, and/or up to 30 hours of community service. Penalties increase with additional violations.
 - It is illegal for anyone to give or sell alcohol to anyone under the age of 21, to anyone who is already intoxicated, or to anyone who is habitually intoxicated. A violation can result in up to a \$1,000 fine and/or up to one year in jail.
 - It is illegal to practice medicine when impaired by alcohol, drugs, physical disability, or mental disability, or for a licensed physician to be a habitual alcohol abuser or drug abuser. A violation can mean loss of professional license and up to a \$10,000 fine.

- It is illegal to drive with one's ability impaired by alcohol or while intoxicated. Driving while intoxicated or impaired can result in fines, a jail sentence, and driver's license revocation or suspension, among potentially other penalties.

This information is based on a review of current law. Laws concerning drugs and alcohol are subject to change.

Disclosure of Conviction for Violation of Criminal Drug Statute Occurring in Workplace:

Each member of Weill Cornell Medical College, including members of the administration, faculty members, staff, and students, must notify his or her supervisor, department chair, or dean of any criminal drug statute conviction (including acceptance of a guilty plea by a judicial authority) for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) days after such conviction. Every supervisor, department chair, or dean is required to notify Human Resources immediately upon the receipt of notice from an employee or student of any criminal drug statute conviction. A representative from Human Resources will promptly, within thirty (30) days after receipt of notice, take appropriate action, in coordination with appropriate department leadership, against such person up to and including termination or dismissal, and/or require such person to satisfactorily complete an approved drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program. Human Resources will ensure reporting of drug-related, criminal convictions that occurred in the workplace of individuals paid from federal funds/grants in accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act.

Counseling and Treatment

Cornell and Weill Cornell Medical College provide various awareness and education programs for faculty members, staff, and students about the dangers of illegal drugs and the abuse of alcohol. Confidential support services are available for those with abuse problems who individually pursue treatment and counseling.

A Drug-Free and Alcohol Abuse Awareness Program has been established at the Medical College to inform faculty members, staff, and students about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace, the Medical College's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace, available drug and alcohol abuse counseling, rehabilitation and employee assistance programs, and the potential penalties for drug and alcohol abuse violations.

Support services for students are available at Student Health Services, (646) 962-6942.

Further information about the Drug-Free and Alcohol Abuse Awareness Program is available from the Human Resources Department or your supervisor.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a short-term counseling and referral service for drug and alcohol abuse as well as other employee concerns. Through the EAP, eligible employees and their dependents may obtain free counseling for substance and alcohol abuse issues which affect them and their families. EAP counselors will assess each case and may make a referral to an appropriate internal program or outside agency best suited to address the rehabilitation needs. EAP counselors will also assist in determining how Cornell health insurance will be helpful in covering costs. The Academic Staff Handbook and Employee

Handbook contain further information about the Employee Assistance Program. An EAP counselor can be contacted by calling 212-746-5890.

Students are reminded to review the Substance Abuse Policy (which covers illicit drug and alcohol abuse) set forth in the Student Handbook and that any drug or alcohol abuse violation may impact a student's fitness or suitability for advancement. Professional staff and advisors are available to assist and direct students to internal and outside programs. Students may also obtain assistance by contacting the Weill Cornell Medical College Student Health Service at 646-962-6942 or the Student Mental Health Program at studentmentalhealth@med.cornell.edu.

Drug-free awareness and alcohol treatment programs available in New York City are:

- 1-888-NYC-WELL (1-888-692-9355), text "WELL" to 65173, or visit <https://nyc.gov/nycwell>, New York City's 24/7 mental health crisis and access line;
- National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Routing Service, (212) 662-4357;
- NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital OTP Opioid Outpatient Treatment, (212) 746-1252;
- Alcoholics Anonymous NYC, (212) 870-3400; and
- Marijuana Anonymous, (917) 525-3653.

Substance Abuse – Impairment Counseling

- ❖ Dr. Ann Beeder, MD (646) 962-2463
- ❖ Dr. Carol Weiss, MD (212) 988-1209

Substance Abuse Resource Page

- ❖ <https://substanceusestigma.weill.cornell.edu/>

Institutional Review

Weill Cornell Medical College will conduct a biennial review of its drug and alcohol abuse policies and programs to determine the effectiveness of such policies and programs, implement any necessary changes, and endure consistent enforcement of required sanctions.