

**Guidelines for  
Policies and Procedures on  
Monitoring Health Care Professionals  
in California:  
*What Medical Staffs Need to Know***

**From  
California Public Protection & Physician Health, Inc.  
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## Preface

In most states, monitoring is done by a statewide Physician Health Program (PHP) sanctioned by the state agency that licenses physicians, and this guideline must be read with that in mind, as well as with the understanding that California does not have such a program.

A Physician Health Program (PHP), as defined by the Federation of State Physician Health Programs, <https://www.fsphp.org/faqs>, is a confidential resource for physicians, other licensed healthcare professionals, or those in training suffering from addictive, psychiatric, medical, behavioral or other potentially impairing conditions. PHPs coordinate effective detection, evaluation, treatment, and continuing care monitoring of physicians with these conditions. This coordination and documentation of a participant's progress allows PHPs to provide documentation verifying a participant's compliance with treatment and/or continuing care recommendations.

In mid 2024, the Medical Board of California agreed to propose the legislation needed to establish a PHP that will meet current best practices and that will have the resources needed to carry out monitoring effectively.

The responsibilities for effective monitoring rest with the entity that privileges the physician. Most medical staffs/medical groups rely on a "wellbeing committee" (as described by The Joint Commission) to carry out that responsibility. However, we find that most wellbeing committees, medical staffs or medical groups do not have the necessary resources, expertise or experience to carry out monitoring appropriately, and they decide to engage the services of a private monitoring company. Even after an effective statewide PHP becomes available for California, medical staffs/medical groups will be responsible for determining that monitoring is carried out effectively. This guideline is designed to inform them as they develop their policies and procedures for monitoring. See the section *Medical Staff Responsibilities When a Monitoring Company Does the Monitoring*.

# Introduction

## Statement of Purpose

Hospital medical staffs, medical groups, and others with responsibility for physician health and patient safety use monitoring as one method of assessing the health-related elements of a provider's ongoing ability to deliver safe patient care.

There are situations where health-related issues have the potential to affect the provider's ability to deliver safe patient care, and medical staffs must determine how to assess the issue and the provider. They must have the information on which to base their action in determining what privileges to award or renew. "Monitoring" as we define it in this document is used to provide that information.

Monitoring is used to observe and gather detailed information that will support a decision about the abilities of the monitored individual over a defined period of time. Different policies and procedures apply to each condition and situation being monitored.

The information in this document is intended to assist those responsible for monitoring, helping them to design and carry out an agreement with a person being monitored and a monitoring company.

Those responsible for monitoring include those with responsibility for privileging and for discipline as well as those who have no role in the disciplinary process but are supportive of the person being monitored. Those involved in the disciplinary process may include medical staff departments, committees, and officers/leaders. For employed physicians, this may also include the Human Resources Department and supervisors. Supportive individuals or entities separate from the disciplinary process may be Wellbeing Committees or, for employees, Employee Assistance Programs.