

**Enrollment is quick and easy  
and available 24 hours a day,  
7 days a week.**

**Call (800) 522-9198**

**For more information about the  
Intervention Program, contact the  
California Board of Registered  
Nursing at (916) 574-7692 or visit  
[www.rn.ca.gov/intervention](http://www.rn.ca.gov/intervention)**



## The Need for Intervention is Crucial

### What is the Intervention Program?

The California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) offers the Intervention Program as a voluntary, non-disciplinary, rehabilitation program for registered nurses (RNs) afflicted with substance use disorder (SUD) or mental illness.

Registered nurses are not immune to substance use disorders (SUDs) or mental illness. According to the Journal of Nursing Regulation, an estimated 10 to 20 percent of nurses are chemically dependent. Healthcare professionals, including RNs, may be particularly susceptible to substance abuse due to job stresses and access to controlled substances. Mental illness, such as major depression, may also affect an RN's ability to practice safely.

Unfortunately, most people suffering from a substance use disorder—a treatable brain disease—or mental illness may not recognize they have a problem. Often, they are the last to admit they need help.

## When Caregivers Need Help



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**California Board of  
Registered Nursing  
Intervention Program  
for Registered Nurses**

## Protecting the Public is Paramount

The goal of the Intervention Program is to protect the public by:

- Promoting early identification and intervention of RNs with SUD or mental illness.
- Developing an individualized, comprehensive rehabilitation plan for RNs.
- Monitoring RNs to ensure successful rehabilitation and return to safe nursing practice.



## Services Provided

### For the public

- Education about the impact of SUD in nursing, how to recognize the signs and symptoms of impairment, and how to intervene when a nurse has an observed problem.
- Confidential consultation with concerned RNs, employers, colleagues, family members, and consumers.
- Effective monitoring is a better alternative to a more time-consuming disciplinary process.
- Training and consultation with employers to assure an RN's smooth transition back to safe nursing practice.

### For the RN

- Encouragement, guidance, and support by dedicated professionals.
- Confidential alternative to disciplinary action.
- Assessment of treatment needs.
- Development of an individualized rehabilitation plan.
- Referral to local support services.
- Monitoring of recovery progress.
- Drug testing.
- Return to safe nursing practice.



## Signs and Symptoms of a Substance Use Disorder



### Behavioral

- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness
- Increased isolation
- Verbal or physical aggression
- Defensiveness

### Physical

- Dilated or pin-point pupils
- Lethargic or jittery
- Changes in appearance
- Slurred, rapid, or pressured speech

### Signs of impaired practice or drug diversion

- Discrepancies in medication documentation
- Discrepancies in narcotic counts
- Unwitnessed wastage of unused medications
- Frequent documentation errors
- RN asks for higher PRN doses for assigned patients

## Is the Intervention Program confidential?

Yes. Confidentiality is protected by law. Once an RN enrolls, the program maintains the confidentiality of all information gathered to develop a rehabilitation plan. When an RN successfully completes the program, their record of participation is destroyed. Their record of participation may be turned over to BRN Enforcement Division in cases where an RN is terminated for non-compliance and is determined to be a threat to themselves or to the public.

## Is the Intervention Program successful?

Yes! More than 2,200 registered nurses have successfully completed the program.

The program's success is attributed to the vigilant monitoring of participants for an average of three to five years; but more importantly, it is due to the encouragement, support, and guidance provided by dedicated health professionals.



## How can RNs enroll?

### Eligibility

RNs are eligible to enroll in the program if they:

- Are a current BRN licensee and reside in California.
- Have not been formally disciplined for substance abuse or mental illness by the board.
- Have not been terminated from any intervention program for non-compliance.
- Are mentally ill or abuse alcohol or drugs.
- Voluntarily agree to enter the program.
- Consent to appropriate medical or psychiatric evaluations.

### Referral

An eligible RN may be referred to the program through:

- Self-referral – RN contacts the program directly for assistance.
- Board referral – BRN offers the program as an alternative to formal discipline, when an RN receives a complaint related to misuse or abuse of alcohol, drugs or mental illness.