



OSTEOPATHIC PHYSICIAN DIVERSION PROGRAM

For information or assistance, call any time: **1.800.522.9198**

Mission Statement

The Osteopathic Physician Diversion Program exists to support the rehabilitation and safe reintegration of California's licensed osteopathic physicians and surgeons whose wellness and ability to practice safely have been impacted by substance abuse or mental health challenges.

Do I Need Help?

If you're questioning whether you need help for a mental health or substance use issue, there's a good chance you would benefit from support. These challenges tend to grow over time, becoming more serious and difficult to address when not recognized early. It's often hard to maintain objectivity when you're too close to the problem. Uncertain or misdirected efforts may increase frustration and stress, making the situation feel overwhelming. For osteopathic physicians and surgeons, unaddressed substance use-related or mental health concerns can impair one's professional judgment and put at risk one's career, and, even worse, one's life.

You're Not Alone...

Substance abuse and mental health challenges are growing concerns in the osteopathic medical profession.



An estimated 10-15% of doctors will develop a problem with substance abuse at some point in their careers.



A study involving over 7,000 U.S. physicians found that 12.9% of male physicians and 21.4% of female physicians met diagnostic criteria for alcohol abuse or dependence.



A 2022 study found that 64.7% of the surveyed osteopathic physicians reported developing or worsening mental health symptoms during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among those, 78.5% did not seek treatment.

Osteopathic physicians and surgeons face high levels of stress, emotional labor, long hours, and frequent exposure to suffering, all while often being expected to suppress their own vulnerabilities. Easy access to controlled substances, stigma around seeking help, and the risk of professional consequences tied to mental health disclosures further

complicate the landscape. These conditions make them particularly susceptible to burnout, depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders. A dedicated, confidential recovery program provides a critical lifeline— offering support, structured monitoring, and access to treatment while preserving careers and, ultimately, protecting public safety through rehabilitation rather than punishment.

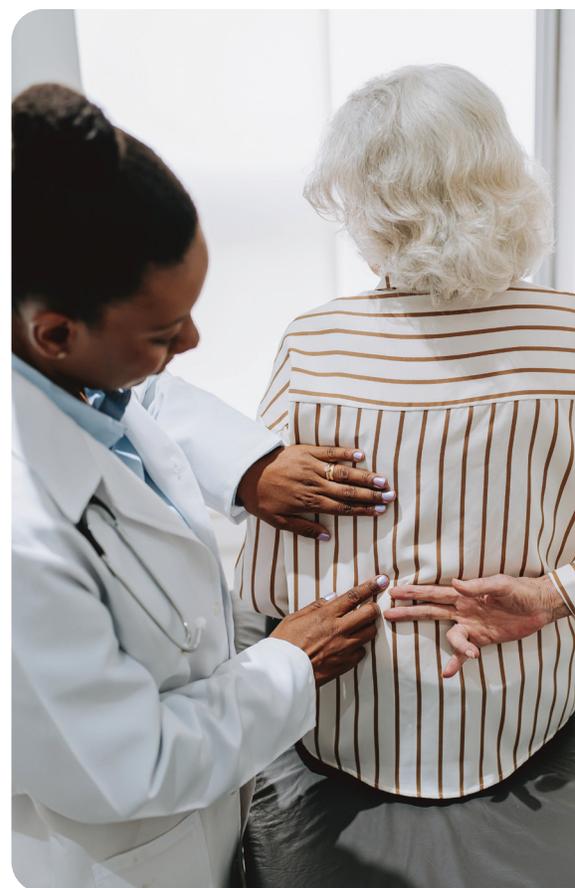
Who Provides the Service?

The California Department of Consumer Affairs Osteopathic Medical Board contracts with Premier Health Group to provide confidential assessment, referral, and monitoring services for the board's Diversion Program. Premier Health Group is a multidisciplinary behavioral health organization committed to reducing the negative impact of addiction and mental illness on California communities.

Who Can Refer to the Program?

The Diversion Program accepts voluntary referrals. Any licensed osteopathic physician or surgeon who is experiencing problematic substance abuse or mental health challenges may voluntarily seek assistance by contacting the 24-hour toll-free number. Most individuals experiencing substance abuse or mental health concerns ultimately wish they had reached out for help sooner— before the problem worsened or led to professional or personal consequences.

All voluntary requests for information and support are strictly confidential, except in cases where the participant is referred by the board as a part of probation, in which case updates about the licensee's progress during the enrollment period are shared with the board's designee. Individuals will be scheduled to meet with a licensed professional for a confidential clinical diagnostic evaluation and the development of a monitoring plan. If clinically appropriate, treatment recommendations are also made. Voluntary participants may be assured that their information will be kept confidential and shared only with the Diversion Program team, the board's Diversion Evaluation Committee (DEC), and the contracted testing vendor unless disclosure is necessary due to a risk of harm to self or others.



Pathways To The Diversion Program

The Osteopathic Medical Board of California refers eligible physicians who are impaired by chemical dependency problems from its disciplinary proceedings to this voluntary program. In addition, the program accepts osteopathic physicians who refer themselves or are referred by employers, friends, or family. Those who choose to self refer prior to becoming involved in any disciplinary processes associated with their licensing board will not face disciplinary action on their license as a result of enrolling.

How to Obtain Services

If you are struggling—or if you live or work with an osteopathic physician who is—call the Diversion Program toll-free at (800) 522-9198, available 24 hours a day.

Sources

American Addiction Centers. (n.d.). Statistics for substance use in medical professionals. Retrieved June 6, 2025, from <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/addiction-statistics-demographics/medical-professionals>

Lee, E., Lo, J., Zhu, P., Fernandez Sweeny, Y., & Fuchs, S. (2022). Mental health outcomes among osteopathic physicians during COVID-19. *International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine*, 46, 6-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijosm.2022.10.002>

Oreskovich, M. R., Shanafelt, T., Dyrbye, L. N., Tan, L., Sotile, W., Satele, D., West, C. P., Sloan, J., & Boone, S. (2015). The prevalence of substance use disorders in American physicians. *The American journal on addictions*, 24(1), 30-38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajad.12173>