

# What is the KARE for Nurses Program?

The Kentucky Alternative Recovery Effort (KARE) for Nurses is a confidential program developed and implemented by the Kentucky Board of Nursing. The purpose of the KARE for Nurses Program is to protect and safeguard the health of the citizens of the Commonwealth by identifying, assisting, and monitoring nurses whose ability to provide nursing care is compromised by a substance use disorder, so they may eventually return to competent and safe nursing practice.

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The program recognizes that nurses are individuals who have dedicated their lives to helping others and may now be in need of assistance. The foundation of the KARE for Nurses Program is the belief that substance use disorders are treatable, and that a nurse's recovery and return to competent nursing practice is in the best interest of both the nurse and public health.

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The KARE for Nurses Program maintains that a nurse should not lose their job or license due to a substance use disorder and offers an opportunity for treatment and monitoring. The program is administered with compassion, concern, and dignity for the nurse, while also prioritizing the best interests of the citizens of the Commonwealth.



## Contact Us

To obtain further information or to seek admission to the Program, please use one of the following methods:

### KARE for Nurses Compliance Branch

📍 312 Whittington Parkway, Ste 300  
Louisville, KY 40222

📞 502-871-1430; 502-429-3313  
Toll Free: 1-800-305-2042 ext. 6

📠 502-429-1245

✉ [KBNComplianceMonitoring@ky.gov](mailto:KBNComplianceMonitoring@ky.gov)



# KARE

Kentucky Alternative  
Recovery Effort (KARE)  
for Nurses



TEAM  
KENTUCKY®

# The Disease

Many people believe that nurses are immune to addiction by virtue of their intelligence and education. In reality, exposure, access, availability, and familiarity with medications often lead predisposed health professionals to develop a Substance Use Disorder (SUD).

Manifestations of an SUD include, but are not limited to: recurrent substance use resulting in an inability to fulfill obligations at work, home, or school; recurrent substance use in physically hazardous situations (e.g., working while impaired or driving while impaired); development of tolerance leading to the use of greater amounts of substances and more frequent use; development of withdrawal symptoms when not using substances; and cravings or a strong urge to use substances.

SUDs are characterized by the use of drugs and/or alcohol despite potential adverse consequences. This compulsive use cycle may include periods where use is controlled, but these are typically followed by at least one episode of out-of-control use, which may result in significant consequences in one's life. Failure to recognize a SUD can exacerbate the problem and cause harm to oneself and others. This is a progressive disease that, if left untreated, can be fatal.

The Board believes that a SUD is a disease influenced by a myriad of factors, including environmental, biological, psychological, emotional, and genetic elements. A growing body of scientific evidence supports the understanding that SUDs are chronic but treatable diseases.

# Services

The KARE for Nurses Program develops agreements based on the unique circumstances of each nurse. Monitoring can be facilitated in several ways, including the following:

- Assisting with identification, assessment, and referral to approved treatment providers;
- Monitoring participants for a period of at least five (5) years during early recovery;
- Providing education to nurses, employers, and other groups about the program; and
- Offering encouragement and support to help ensure participants are able to practice nursing in accordance with acceptable and prevailing standards of safe nursing care.



See the KBN website at  
<http://kbn.ky.gov>  
for additional information.

# Eligibility Requirements

A nurse may access the program through self-referral, board referral, or referral from another entity (such as an employer). Admission to the KARE for Nurses Program is available to individuals who meet the following requirements:

- Are a Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, or Advanced Practice Registered Nurse licensed in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, or an applicant for a credential issued by the Board;
- Submit a written request for participation in the program;
- Admit in writing to abusing or being dependent on alcohol and/or drugs;
- Have not been terminated from a similar program in this or any other state for noncompliance;
- Obtain a substance use disorder assessment performed by a Board-approved evaluator that conforms to Board guidelines;
- Agree not to be employed in any capacity in a patient care setting, or in one that requires licensure, until approved to do so by the Program staff; and
- Agree to the terms set forth in the agreement and in 201 KAR 20:450.