People in all walks of life have problems with drugs, alcohol, emotional, and mental health issues. Nurses are no exception.

**Intervention Project for Nurses (IPN)** provides evaluation and treatment of impaired nurses, with the goal of helping them to recover from their conditions and return to work as soon as they are able to resume safe practice in nursing. Many of the nurses who enter the program are referred by colleagues or supervisors. Some, however, come to the realization that they need help and refer themselves to IPN.

**Referring impaired nurses helps them recover, protects patient safety.**

IPN is committed to nurses getting the assistance that they need while protecting the public. IPN encourages nurses whose job performance may be affected due to impairment to consult IPN staff regarding the best way to approach the situation.

To contact IPN, please visit ipnfl.org.

**There are different treatment options available.**

The first step once nurses are referred to the IPN program is to initiate an evaluation to determine whether there is a need and if the nurse will benefit from treatment. If an evaluation is warranted, each nurse is given a choice of three professional evaluators and asked to select the one that best suits them. If the evaluator recommends treatment, the nurse is then given the choice of three treatment programs. IPN has a network of dozens of approved professional treatment programs in Florida and other states. Depending on the nature of the condition(s), nurses may undergo treatment by highly-qualified addictionists and/or psychiatrists. While in treatment, nurses are usually required to withdraw from practice temporarily. Return to practice occurs once the treatment program in consultation with IPN determines the nurse is fit to return to practice. Performance is monitored for five years to ensure ongoing safety and to minimize relapse.

**Nurse support group imparts a “sense of belonging.”**

Often feelings of shame and a sense of isolation are associated with addictive diseases, particularly with nurses. Meeting together with other nurses who face similar feelings and issues happens in nurse support groups. Nurse support groups are a place where a “sense of belonging” happens and nurses realize they are not “alone” or “bad.” IPN sponsors more than 100 nurse support groups around the state.

**Do Impaired Nurses Return To Work? YES!**

The good news for impaired nurses is that treatment provided under the auspices of IPN works in the large majority of cases. Between 75 to 80 percent of the nurses who go through the program enter long term recovery and return to practice safely.

The majority of nurses who successfully complete the IPN program do so without receiving any disciplinary action upon their licenses. However, those who fail to follow through with IPN conditions of participation are turned over to the Board of Nursing for disciplinary action that could result in the loss of their licenses.

**IPN and FNA, partners for more than 25 years**

IPN is an affiliate of FNA, working in collaboration with FNA for more than 25 years toward the goal of helping nurses. FNA initially lobbied in support of legislation to form IPN as an alternative to discipline for nurses with mental, physical, and substance abuse impairments. In 1983, Governor Bob Graham signed legislation which provided for the beginning of IPN, the first program of its kind in the country. Since 1983, 43 other States have begun programs similar to IPN.

**IPN is supported by the American Nurses Association (ANA) through its code of ethics, which supports colleagues and patients to ensure adequate treatment for nurse and safety for patients. For more information on the ANA code of ethics, visit nursingworld.org.**

Brought To You By:
The WorkForce Advocacy Program (WFA) within FNA supports nurses in personal and professional growth and development in the practice setting to promote positive work-related experiences. WFA collaborates with internal and external stakeholders to provide services and develop policies that positively impact the work environment.

Your Resource In These Challenging Times

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The purposes of the FNA WFA program are:
• Serve as the sole exclusive Workforce advocacy program for FNA.
• Support nurses in personal and professional growth and development in the practice setting to promote positive work-related experiences.
• Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to provide services and develop policies that positively impact the work environment.

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