

Substance Abuse and HPSP

Physical therapists (PTs) and physical therapist assistants (PTAs) can also struggle with substance use disorders—just like anyone else. Experts estimate that about 1 in 10 people will face an issue with alcohol or drugs at some point in their lives. Working in health care can increase this risk because of high stress and, in some settings, easier access to controlled substances.

Many PTs and PTAs who begin to experience problems with alcohol or drugs are able to get the help they need privately, without involvement from the Minnesota Board of Physical Therapy. Support, treatment, and recovery resources are available, and many clinicians get better with early help.

However, a major challenge is that people with substance use disorders often deny there is a problem. They may be the last to recognize that they need help. When substance use goes untreated, it can put patients at risk and can threaten the therapist's own health and safety. Each year, too many Minnesota therapists report DUI or DWI incidents, putting themselves and the public in danger.

When there is a concern of substance abuse with a PT or PTA, it's important for peers or supervisors to take action. Like any disease, substance use disorders follow predictable patterns if nothing is done—usually getting worse over time.

Minnesota PTs and PTAs have access to the **Health Professionals Services Program (HPSP)**. HPSP helps identify substance-related issues early, provides support, and works to change the outcome before harm occurs. The goal is to protect the public while helping professionals get well and continue their careers safely.

For more information, you can visit [Health Professionals Services Program \(HPSP\)](#)