



North Carolina Army National Guard Substance Abuse Program

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Agenda

Review of the NCNG Substance Abuse Program and Current Initiatives

- State and National Overview
- Identified Concerns
- Current Initiatives/Changes
- Possible Future Work Efforts



National Guard Overview

NCARNG Overview of key components

- **Army National Guard encompasses over 340,000 Soldiers in all 54 states and territories.**
- **On average, National Guard Soldiers test positive for illicit substances at a higher rate than their Active Duty Counterparts.**
- **North Carolina Army National Guard (NCARNG) has over 10,000 Soldiers.**
- **NCARNG programs are built on a combination of Active Duty Army, National Guard Bureau, and state regulations and policies.**



National Guard Overview

NCARNG Overview of key components

- Initiatives involving substance abuse result from a collaboration between the NCARNG Substance Abuse Program, Medical, Behavioral Health, and drug testing.
- Soldiers who test positive for a possible prescription must provide prescription information to be cleared by the Medical Review Officer (MRO).
- Soldiers are most likely to receive medications from a private physician. While Soldiers are expected to provide this information to the NCARNG, this does not always occur.
- All Soldiers who test positive for an illicit substance are to be referred to the Substance Abuse Program for assessment and possible treatment.



Identified Concerns

Current concerns identified in NCARNG

- NCARNG currently sees a majority of Soldiers due to misuse of THC.
- Current research shows that alcohol is the number one drug misused or abused by Soldiers.
- Overall, the NCARNG has seen fewer Soldiers testing positive for illicit substances.
- Opiates and prescription medications are cleared through the MRO proces, but this only looks to see if the prescription provided is legitimate. The MRO process does *not* specifically identify Soldiers who may be misusing their prescriptions or that may be on pain management for an extended period of time. While we are identifying some of those without prescriptions, we currently don't know the full scope of our opiate problem.
- NC is the only state to currently fund assessments and up to four Brief Interventions for Soldiers who are enrolled in the Substance Abuse Program. However, alternative or additional treatment (inpatient, IOP, extended counseling) is *not* covered, and the Soldier is responsible for all out-of-pocket costs.



Identified Concerns

SOLDIERS TESTING POSITIVE BY FISCAL YEAR*

ILLCIT SUBSTANCE

	2015	2014	2013	2012
Total Tested	6,094	6,495	6,425	6,997
THC	118	141	147	213
SYN CAN	0	0	N/A	N/A
COC	6	15	7	9
HEROIN	0	0	0	N/A
AMP	12	6	6	34
D-MET	1	2	0	3
COD	2	2	2	0
MOR	1	1	2	0
HYDRO	5	18	10	5
OXY	16	22	21	12
BENZO	7	6	1	N/A
STEROID	0	0	N/A	N/A
Total Illicit	168	213	196	276

TOTAL OPIATE POSITIVES

2015 – 24

2014 – 43

2013 – 35

2012 – 17

** Results are for illicit tests only. For all prescription medications this is AFTER the Medical Review process*



Current Initiatives and Changes

Current efforts to address concerns in the NCARNG

- **Currently we are expanding our prevention training to ensure we are able to provide awareness and training to as many Soldiers as possible. Training also provides specific information regarding prescription medication policies and the Army self-referral policy.**
- **We are working with units to survey their Soldiers and identify a variety of risks, including substance misuse. We then are able to help provide tailored training**
- **We have updated our state processes and procedures to ensure all those that do test positive are appropriately referred, provided an opportunity for assessment/treatment, and tracked.**
- **We are following Army directives to expand the drug testing program.**



Current Initiatives and Changes

Current efforts to address concerns in the NCARNG

- **We are increasing collaboration between Substance Abuse Program, Medical, and Behavioral Health to better identify those that may be misusing prescriptions or may be at risk to do so.**
- **We are expanding our marketing campaign to increase awareness of the program by ensuring that flyers are posted at every armory.**



Possible Future Work Efforts

Possible future endeavors for the NCARNG to continue to identify and address

- **Continue to ensure that all Soldiers are able to receive an assessment. In addition, search for ways to assist Soldiers in receiving care at multiple levels beyond just Brief Interventions.**
- **Explore the possibility of outreach and awareness campaigns to increase awareness of opiate misuse or abuse in the state. (*Drug Take Back Day?*)**