



WASHINGTON PHYSICIANS HEALTH PROGRAM

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HEALTH PROGRAM

2016

## Program Overview

The Washington Physicians Health Program (WPHP) has served the healthcare professionals of Washington State since 1986. Founded by the Washington State Medical Association to reach out to troubled colleagues, WPHP services include crisis intervention, informal assessment, referrals for evaluation or treatment, treatment monitoring, education and outreach, and support for professionals, their employers and families who need our help. This primarily includes healthcare professionals who have a mental or physical condition that could affect their ability to practice with reasonable safety to patients. Examples of these conditions are substance abuse or dependence, severe major depressive disorder, bipolar mood disorder, cognitive disorders, severe anxiety disorders, personality disorders, and physical disorders such as multiple sclerosis and chronic pain. WPHP is a physician-directed program with an experienced staff. The organization is dedicated to helping healthcare professionals recover and promoting patient safety by intervening on illnesses before they affect patient care.

**WPHP is a confidential resource for healthcare professionals and supports all health-related concerns including:**

- substance abuse or dependence
- depression and psychiatric conditions
- stress-related illnesses
- cognitive and physical disorders

### WPHP Mission

To facilitate the rehabilitation of healthcare professionals who have physical or mental conditions that could compromise patient safety and to monitor their recovery.

## Dear Friends,

As chair of the Board of Directors, it is my privilege to offer an introduction to this 2016 Annual Report which accounts the enormous service and benefit that the Washington Physicians Health Program has provided to our regional community over the past year.

Our primary job is to protect patient safety. We do this by assisting healthcare professionals experiencing issues that may impair their ability to practice and offering them compassionate care and monitoring. These valued colleagues work with us to regain their physical, emotional and spiritual health so that they can remain active and vigorous health care professionals in our communities.

WPHP is an organization that transforms lives. We are blessed with excellent clinicians and staff working with a talented and engaged board, and, together, WPHP continues addressing the diverse needs of our clients. Take a minute to read about what we do and why we are so proud of our work to restore the health and well-being of our colleagues.

Thank you for your support and continued interest in our programs, our services and our mission of advancing clinician health and patient safety.

Edward A. Walker, MD, MHA  
Chair, WPHP Board of Directors





## Client Interview

Laura Moss MD first met James during a return to work planning meeting with other WPHP staff. She was interested in his story because he appeared to be doing very well. He presented looking relaxed, introspective with a kind sense of humor, and even peaceful about his process. She spoke with him about his journey into recovery.

**L:** How did you first become involved with WPHP?

**J:** While living in a different state for residency training I received a DUI. When I applied for a Washington state medical license I reported my previous DUI. I was referred to the WPHP for an evaluation. WPHP monitored me for 6 months and then released me as I was not demonstrating behaviors suggestive of a drinking problem.

Many years later I was slowly burning out in my career and my burnout was exacerbated when my wife became very ill. I felt I could no longer ignore the stress, the burnout, and the worry about my wife. I became obsessed with thoughts that things were not going to go well for us. I felt I couldn't share what was going on with my colleagues because I feared they would think I couldn't handle things. I couldn't talk to my wife because I didn't want to exacerbate her fears. I needed to be there for her and I didn't address my own needs. I ended up in a box. I self-medicated with controlled substances and it helped for a while. The substances gave me hope that they would help and then they stopped working. They fed into my need to be self-reliant and then they made everything worse. I became increasingly isolated, more irrationally fearful and then I became hopeless. I made an attempt to end my life and I believe there was a subconscious hope of being discovered. I think it was a cry for help. I couldn't ask for help but if I sent up a flare with the behavior I would get the help I needed.

**L:** What was it like for you to meet with the WPHP again?

**J:** When I met with the WPHP I was not ready to own it, admit that I had been using substances inappropriately. I tried to explain it away. About one hour

into the interview I realized I was out of control and it's not how I want to be... inconsistent with my moral compass. There was a moment where it seemed like this was my chance to get some help. Previously, I didn't think there was a solution and I felt like a failure. I couldn't deal with things or handle it on my own. My solution wasn't working and that is when my "higher power" showed up for the first time. I let it all out. I summarized what I had done like a journal report and had no idea why things had happened. It felt so good to come clean and I was immensely relieved. I thought my life would be over if I told the truth. I worried my wife would be angry and instead she said, "Thank God. I am so proud of you". I wish she had known about the PHP prior to my admission because she didn't know where to get help.

**L:** How has your focus changed over time?

**J:** The process of coming into recovery re-ordered my priorities. I was able to focus on aspects of my own health and development. I made sure that I was cleaning house, gaining understanding, and seeing my own humanity. I began to forgive myself and move forward. As I spend more time in recovery my focus has become maintaining balance and peace. I am not turning a blind eye to emotional things. Processing emotions allows one to avoid disappointment in oneself for not living up to unrealistic or false expectations. I try to bring my best self into situations which has resulted in improvements in all of my relationships...family, friends, and work. I feel very present and a lot more happy, hopeful and excited about the future, even under multiple stressors, without a promise for future employment. I wouldn't have been able to handle this sort of stress several years ago.

**L:** What has surprised you about being involved with WPHP?

**J:** I am surprised that once I was able to be honest about my use I have been able to be honest about many things. I am not sure if I expected the WPHP to be more punitive, but what they proposed seemed reasonable and logical. They provided me a recommendation for a treatment plan and executed it. I am surprised that I have been out of work this long, but with each passing month I have gained new insights and acceptance about recovery. I realize now that I was not ready to go back to work. I may have said that I was ready, but I think that I would have had more difficulties if I had gone back sooner. I feel like this has been a therapeutic medical leave and I remind myself that it's a time to heal and learn. If I had broken my hip I would have to apply myself to rehabilitation. I have been able to find meaning in the time off so I could tolerate it and even thrive. I have some thoughts about my former employer's handling of my situation. It felt unjust, but I have had time to process my feelings and put my recovery into action. I think it will provide me strength for dealing with situations in the future.

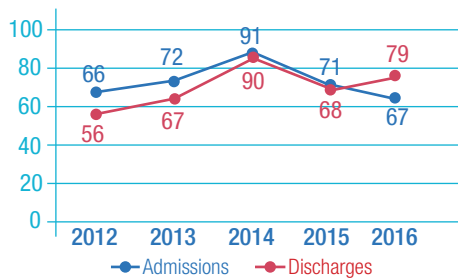
**L:** What advice do you have for others?

**J:** I believe that participants have to be willing to do the work and be willing to look at things. When I became honest I was able to understand that my wife and my doctors were there to help. I also have realized that whatever I don't want to do, that is what I need to do because that is what is most raw. I need to address those raw things, the things with the loudest volume or the strongest fears. For me, the first year of recovery has required willingness to accept guidance from others and find people who know what they are doing. Part of that includes trusting the WPHP. It takes effort and time, so I recommend that clients be patient. I realized that it would not do me any good to yell at my fractured arm in an effort to get it to heal faster.

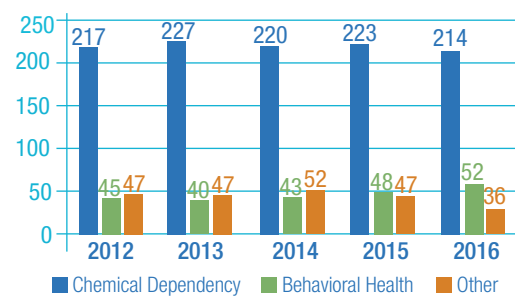


## 2016 Participants

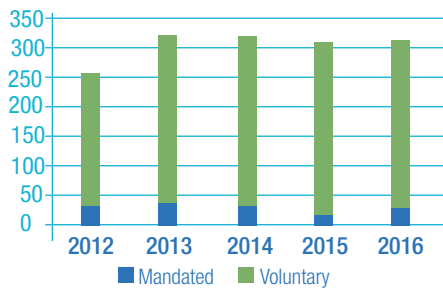
### Annual Program Admissions & Discharges



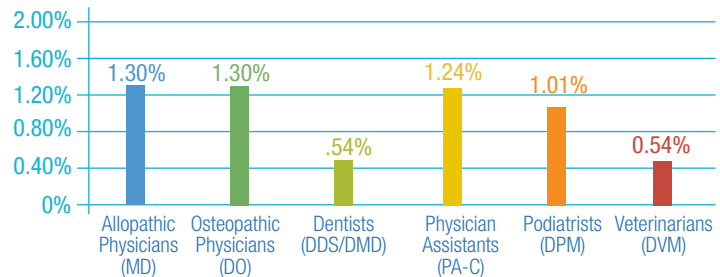
### Program Participants by Contract Type



### Program Participants by Case Type

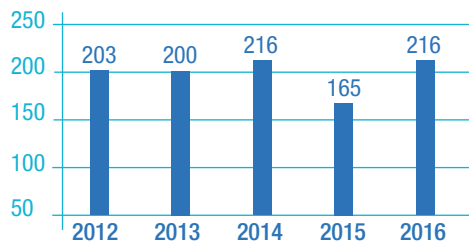


### 2016: Licensees in Washington Participating in WPHP (%)

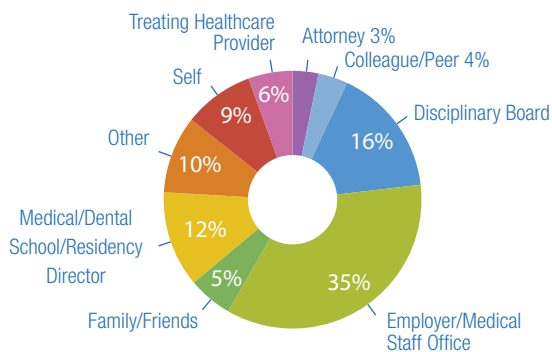


## 2016 Referrals

### Annual Referrals



### 2016 Referrals by Source



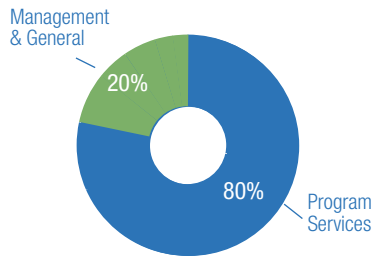
### 2016 Referrals by Location Total: 216

#### Out of State:

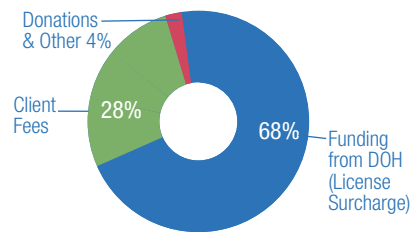
Alabama 2  
Arizona 1  
California 2  
Colorado 1  
Connecticut 1  
Georgia 1  
Idaho 2  
Illinois 1  
Massachusetts 1  
Michigan 1  
Montana 1  
New Jersey 1  
New Mexico 1  
New York 1  
North Carolina 1  
Oklahoma 1  
Oregon 4  
South Dakota 1  
Texas 1



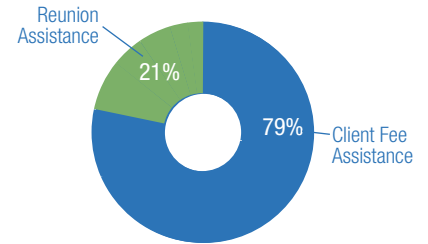
## FY2016 Functional Expenses



## FY2016 Revenue Sources



## FY2016 Direct Financial Aid to Clients



WPHP provided \$35,852 in financial assistance in the 2016 fiscal year. 79% of the financial assistance supported clients in paying their monthly client fees. 21% supported clients through the Lynn R. Hanks, MD Reunion Scholarship Fund which provides financial assistance to allow clients and their significant others to attend the WPHP Annual Reunion.

The Washington Physicians Health Program wishes to express its gratitude to all of the individuals, organizations, agencies, and others who have contributed their time, energy, and financial support. Without your help, WPHP would not be able to support its mission.

Private contributions help the organization assist healthcare professionals, conduct

research into substance abuse and prevention of impairment, provide scholarships for those who could not otherwise afford treatment, and support education and outreach efforts in the community. Please help WPHP continue to make a difference in the lives of healthcare professionals and their patients in the state of Washington.

### Who We Serve

WPHP serves allopathic, podiatric and osteopathic physicians, dentists, veterinarians, physician assistants, residents and the students and families of these disciplines.

## Outreach

WPHP outreach efforts included 63 hours of educational presentations in 2016! WPHP helps raise awareness about health-related concerns among healthcare professionals and professionals in training so that audience members are better able to access WPHP services and support the health of their colleagues. Staff members are available to provide educational articles, live and web-based programs, and continuing medical education on a number of topics such as:

- WPHP Services and Physician Health
- Occupational Hazards of a Career in Medicine
- Substance Use, Addiction, and Recovery for Healthcare Professionals
- Stress and Burnout Among Healthcare Professionals
- Nurturing Resilience and Recovering Joy in Medicine
- Cannabis Legalization: A Primer for Healthcare Professionals
- Disruptive Behavior and Health: What's the Connection?

For more information visit [wphp.org](http://wphp.org) or call (206) 583-0127



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