

**NCAA Banned Drugs and Medical Exceptions Policy  
Guidelines Regarding Medical Reporting  
for Student-Athletes with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)  
Taking Prescribed Stimulants**

*The NCAA bans classes of drugs because they can harm student-athletes and can create an unfair advantage in competition. Some legitimate medications contain NCAA banned substances, and student-athletes may need to use these medicines to support their academics and their general health. The NCAA has a procedure to review and approve legitimate use of medications that contain NCAA banned substances through a Medical Exceptions Procedure. The diagnosis of adult ADHD remains clinically based utilizing clinical interviews, symptom-rating scales, and subjective reporting from patients and others. The following guidelines will help institutions ensure adequate medical records are on file for student-athletes diagnosed with ADHD in order to request an exception in the event a student-athlete tests positive during NCAA Drug Testing.*

*1. General considerations. Student-athletes diagnosed with ADHD in childhood should provide records of the ADHD assessment and history of treatment. Student-athletes treated since childhood with ADHD stimulant medication but who do not have records of childhood ADHD assessment, or who are initiating treatment as an adult, must undergo a comprehensive evaluation to establish a diagnosis of ADHD. There are currently no formal guidelines or standards of care for the evaluation and management of adult ADHD. The diagnosis is based on a clinical evaluation. ADHD is a neurobiological disorder that should be assessed by an experienced clinician and managed by a physician to improve the functioning and quality of life of an individual.*

*a. Student-athletes should have access to a comprehensive continuum of care including educational, behavioral, psychosocial and pharmacological services provided by licensed practitioners who have experience in the diagnosis and management of ADHD. Student athletes treated with ADHD stimulant medication should receive, at a minimum, annual clinical evaluations.*

*b. Mental health professionals who evaluate and prescribe medical therapy for student-athletes with ADHD should have appropriate training and experience in the diagnosis and management of ADHD and should have access to consultation and referral resources, such as appropriate medical specialists.*

*c. Primary care professionals providing mental health services (specifically the prescribing of stimulants) for student-athletes with ADHD should have experience in the diagnosis and management of ADHD and should have access to consultation and referral resources (e.g., qualified mental health professionals as well as other appropriate medical specialists).*

*2. Recommended ways to facilitate academic, athletics, occupational and psychosocial success in the college athlete with adult ADHD taking prescribed stimulants include:*

*a. Access to practitioners experienced in the diagnosis and management of adult ADHD.*

*b. A timely, comprehensive clinical evaluation and appropriate diagnosis using current medical standards.*

- c. Access to disability services.*
- d. Appropriate medical reporting to athletics departments/sports medicine staff.*
- e. Regular mental health/general medical follow-up.*

*3. Student-Athlete Document Responsibility. The student-athlete's documentation from the prescribing physician to the athletics departments/ sports medicine staff should contain a minimum of the following information to help ensure that ADHD has been diagnosed and is being managed appropriately (see Attachment for physician letter criteria):*

- a. Description of the evaluation process which identifies the assessment tools and procedures.*
- b. Statement of the Diagnosis, including when it was confirmed.*
- c. History of ADHD treatment (previous/ongoing).*
- d. Statement that a non-banned ADHD alternative has been **considered** if a stimulant is currently prescribed.*
- e. Statement regarding follow-up and monitoring visits.*

*4. Institutional Document Responsibility. The institution should note ADHD treatment in the student-athlete's medical record on file in the athletics department. In order to request a medical exception for ADHD stimulant medication use, it is important for the institution to have on file documentation that an evaluation has been conducted, the student-athlete is undergoing medical care for the condition, and the student-athlete is being treated appropriately. The institution should keep the following on confidential file:*

- a. Record of the student-athlete's evaluation.*
- b. Statement of the Diagnosis, including when it was confirmed.*
- c. History of ADHD treatment (previous/ongoing).*
- d. Copy of the most recent prescription (as documented by the prescribing physician).*