

## NASN ALL MEMBER FORUM

### ASSESSMENTS FOR POSSIBLE DRUG USE - SCHOOL NURSES

Original post - 2/26/25

Good Morning -

I'm here for some guidance or information where to get guidance about assessing students for drug use. This Monday, I was asked to assess four students for marijuana use. I have no formal training for this type of assessment. I wonder if I'm allowed to do this without notifying the parents first. I certainly cannot diagnose one way or the other. Later that day, I learned that a person in authority wrote a referral (the student was suspended), which was shown to me, which said that I advised them that the student was under the influence of marijuana, which I did not say. I'm frustrated.

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To offer another perspective...

In my state (Washington) DITEP training used to be shared more broadly, but the ESDs stopped several years ago because it was found that students of color were disproportionately evaluated for suspected abuse. I've advised my staff that their role is to determine whether or not a student is safe and healthy to be at school. We are not law enforcement officials. It's also important that the health room remains a place where students can feel safe and the nurses can maintain a therapeutic relationship, NOT a place where students will potentially be disciplined. In our district, if a student is suspected of being under the influence, the nurse will do a physical assessment and determine if the student needs emergency treatment. If no emergency treatment is needed,

admin then determines the next steps. That may include contacting the parents and/or law enforcement based on the circumstances.

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