

Testimonial of a NCPHP Past Participant 12/5/16

“I came to be associated with the NC Physicians Health Program in 2009 during what was, without a doubt, the lowest imaginable point in both my personal and professional lives. A prolonged, seemingly unending tragedy that would eventually take my son from me had lead me into a slow motion downward spiral that finally ended at the bottom of a Grey Goose bottle as I “self-medicated” to numb the pain and loss.

Prior to the onset of this nightmare I was professionally living and working my “dream” job. I had for many years been associated with one of the country’s premier ED staffing agencies as an “internal locum” and would, about 3 times each month, fly off to wherever their greatest staffing need was at that moment and “put out the fire”. I worked 10-12 ED shifts each month and with lots of free time would spend weeks at a time working as ship’s physician on cruise ships all over the world. It all abruptly came crashing down with a DUI and I found myself at the NCPHP office in Raleigh.

It was not terribly difficult for the PHP to quickly guide me to the realization that my life was unmanageable, out of control and a drastic reset was needed. I entered a rehab facility where I spent about 3 months. Thereafter, courtesy of the NC Medical Board’s 2-year suspension of my license, I was able to totally immerse myself in AA, attending meetings daily, and, for a time, actually residing at my AA sponsor’s home. With time and effort, new realities, very different, much healthier, certainly much more sane ways in which to conduct both my personal and professional lives became manifested and integrated into the essence of the new person I evolved into. PHP was there throughout the process to mentor and nurture it.

Professional “rehabilitation” was a protracted, cumbersome, often very frustrating process. At the time the NC Medical Board elected to suspend my license, I also held active licenses in 8 other states. Based solely on the NC suspension, some other states also imposed suspensions. The process of reversing those suspensions in and of itself was a bureaucratic nightmare. I doubt it would ever have been accomplished without the wise counsel and advocacy of the NCPHP. It has now been about 5 years since my return to practice and my monitoring contract with the NCPHP has successfully been completed. My life is a far cry from what it once was. Long gone are the days of flying off to EDs all over the country or sailing off into the sunset on cruise ships. I am now an Attending ED Physician at a small, rural, low volume, low acuity facility just 15 minutes from my home. Through this process, I have come to a very sweet, very sane, very peaceful place in my life. I would not suggest to any of you that you degenerate into a pathetic drunk to reach such a point in your life, but it certainly worked for me. None of it could have been accomplished with the unyielding support, wise counsel, and so very competent guidance of the NCPHP.”