

OPSU Athletic Training

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Documentation

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 medications 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, symptoms-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.

Stimulant medications commonly prescribed to treat ADHD, such as Adderall and Ritalin, are among banned substances for which a medical exception for a positive drug test may be granted, provided a student-athlete's institution presents documentation that those substances have been prescribed by a physician and is supported by a clinical assessment for educational or health reasons.

In order to process a medical exception for a banned stimulant, an institution must be prepared to submit documentation at the time of confirmation of a positive drug test. Otherwise, the institution will have to submit an appeal for the positive test. Under the stricter application of medical exceptions, documentation for stimulants prescribed to treat ADHD must include the following:

Student-Athlete Document Responsibility. The student-athlete's documentation from the prescribing physician to the athletics department/ sports medicine staff should contain a minimum of the following information to help ensure that ADHD has been diagnosed and is being managed appropriately:

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

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:

1. Record of the student-athlete's evaluation
2. Statement of the Diagnosis, including when it was confirmed.
3. History of ADHD treatment (previous/ongoing).
4. Copy of the most recent prescription (as documented by the prescribing physician).