PAPIN
Peer Assistance Program in Nursing
The Peer Assistance Program in Nursing (PAPIN)

- The Peer Assistance Program in Nursing (PAPIN) is a program of the South Carolina Nurses Association (SCNA) that is conducted as part of SCNA’s commitment to nurses in our state.

- PAPIN works in collaboration with the Recovering Professionals Program (RPP) through a contractual relationship.
PAPIN - Peer Assistance Program in Nursing

• Purpose
• History
• Structure
• Who we serve
• Educating nurses and employers about addictions
Purpose

- The purpose of PAPIN is to provide support groups for nurses who are dealing with addictions.
- The focus is on assisting the nurse to deal with issues related to recovery and work, with the goal of returning the nurse to professional practice, if possible.
History of PAPIN

• Established in 1983 as a structural unit of SCNA
• Initiated by members of the Psychiatric-Mental Health Special Interest Group
• Being addicted was no longer against the law, practicing while impaired was the issue
Structure

• PAPIN is run by a Steering Committee of SCNA members and is led by a chairperson appointed by the SCNA Board.

• The SCNA Board approves all policies and procedures of PAPIN.
Structure

Board of Nursing

Self-report

RPP

PAPIN
PAPIN – Who We Serve

• Nurses who have either entered RPP voluntarily or have been referred to RPP by the Board of Nursing may be required to attend PAPIN meetings as part of their recovery plan, if they live within 50 miles of a group meeting.

• Nurses may also attend PAPIN meetings without involvement through RPP.

• PAPIN’s services are free and confidential.
PAPIN Meetings

PAPIN meetings are support groups, not therapy groups.

–The focus is on assisting the nurse to deal with issues related to recovery and work, with the goal of returning the nurse to professional practice, if possible.
PAPIN group facilitators are appointed by the PAPIN Steering Committee and, in addition to being SCNA members, are required to meet criteria set by the Steering Committee in order to serve as facilitators.
Group Facilitators

- Are required to maintain attendance records of all group meetings and to provide those records to RPP as requested.

- Have an obligation to report to RPP when a nurse referred by RPP either drops out of the group or relapses.
Locations of PAPIN Groups

- Greenville
- Spartanburg
- Columbia (2 groups)
- Charleston
- Florence
- Myrtle Beach
- Loris
Issues Facing Nurses in Recovery

• Limited understanding of the disease of addiction
• Relapse prevention
• Current nursing market
• Removing barriers to re-entry into practice
Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry. Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations. This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use or other behaviors. 

ASAM, 8/11
The mechanism of addiction

• Substances of abuse stimulate the brain reward pathway, creating an experience of pleasure or a “high”
• The reward pathways in the brain are actually altered when a person who is neurobiologically susceptible takes one of these substances.
The mechanism of addiction

• Addicting drugs work by either agonizing (enhancing) or antagonizing (interfering with) neurotransmitters.

• The neurotransmitters are vital to our sense of well-being
Relapse prevention

- Addiction is a disease in which relapse is an issue because the brain pathways have actually changed.
- Strong support systems are a key to relapse prevention
- RPP and PAPIN provide the support needed
Current market for nurses

- Weak economy, cutbacks in funding have led to fewer nurses being hired.
- Even nurses without addiction disease are having difficulty finding jobs.
- Not all positions are suitable for a nurse in recovery.
Recent positive events

- Revitalization of PAPIN
- Collaboration with the Board of Nursing around some re-entry into practice issues
- Advances in genomics and increasing awareness of the neurobiology of addiction
PAPIN’s Current Initiative

• Educating nurses about addictions and recovery
  ❖ Articles in the SC Nurse
  ❖ Informational displays at meetings and conventions
  ❖ Presentations to groups
  ❖ Forming partnerships to promote understanding
Toolkit being developed

• Modeled after the Maine Nurses Association’s toolkit for dealing with addiction.

• PAPIN Steering Committee will be developing a South Carolina version of the toolkit to be available to nurses and employers around the state.
What questions do you have?