

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Requirements for Approval of Medical Review Officer (MRO) Certification

HHS publishes the Mandatory Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs (Mandatory Guidelines) establishing standards for federal workplace drug testing programs. The most recent revisions to the Mandatory Guidelines were published on October 23, 2023 for both Urine (88 FR 70768, effective date 2/1/2024) and Oral Fluid (88 FR 70814, effective date 10/10/2023).

The Mandatory Guidelines address the role and qualifications of Medical Review Officers (MRO) and HHS approval of entities that certify MROs. Subpart M-Medical Review Officer (MRO), Section 13.2, **“How are nationally recognized entities or subspecialty boards that certify MROs approved?”** states as follows:

“All nationally recognized entities or subspecialty boards which seek approval by the Secretary to certify physicians as MROs for federal workplace drug testing programs must submit their qualifications, a sample examination, and other necessary supporting examination materials (e.g., answers, previous examination statistics or other background examination information, if requested). Approval will be based on an objective review of qualifications that include a copy of the MRO applicant application form, documentation that the continuing education courses are accredited by a professional organization, and the delivery method and content of the examination. Each approved MRO certification entity must resubmit their qualifications for approval every two years. The Secretary shall publish at least every two years a notice in the Federal Register listing those entities and subspecialty boards that have been approved. This notice is also available on the Internet at <https://www.samhsa.gov/workplace> .

If your MRO-certifying entity or board is seeking HHS approval to certify MROs performing reviews of federal employee drug test results, please submit a written request including the qualifications of your organization, a sample examination, and sample MRO application to:

Joshua Hunt, Pharm.D., MPH
Lieutenant Commander, USPHS
Division of Workplace Programs, SAMHSA/CSAP
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 16N06D
Rockville, MD 20857

Additionally, please include with your hard copy submitted package an electronic PDF version by email to Joshua.hunt@samhsa.hhs.gov.