

WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO TO ADDRESS ADDICTION IN THE WORKPLACE



Employers experience the effects of untreated addiction in lost productivity, inattentiveness at work, higher risk for workplace injuries, absenteeism, turnover, health care expenses, workers' compensation, and increased taxes to pay for costs accrued to the public sector. There are costs that are incurred both by employees and employees' families. Addiction affects employees in every industry, but construction, entertainment, recreation, and food service have rates of employee substance use that are twice the national average. These costs are largely avoidable for employers who invest in treatment and recovery. Employees whose addiction is effectively addressed have fewer days of unscheduled leave, have lower rates of turnover, and use fewer health care services.¹

75% of individuals with a substance use disorder are employed¹

Annual cost to employer for an employee with untreated addiction = \$2,600 - \$13,000¹

Average annual cost savings to employer for employee in recovery = \$3,200¹

Key Recommendations for Investing in Addiction Supports in the Workplace:

- Provide education and information about substance misuse and addiction, including information about prevention and treatment, to employees²
- Include information about addiction prevention in employee wellness programs²
- Cover addiction treatment in employee health plans²
- Ensure that employees who screen positive for drug use are referred to treatment
- Train managers to identify and respond to substance misuse among employees²
- Provide supports to help employees return to work after completing treatment through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)²
- To reduce stigma, create a compassionate environment to support employees who have addiction or who have a family member with addiction

Additional Resources:

- [Real Costs of Substance Use in Your Workforce Calculator](#)
- **National Safety Council**, [Drugs at Work: What Employers Need to Know](#)
- **National Safety Council**, [Prescription Drug Employer Kit](#)

Sources:

1. Goplerud, E., Hodge, S., & Benham, T. (2017). A substance use cost calculator for US employers with an emphasis on prescription pain medication misuse. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 59(11), 1063-1071.
2. Burke, J., Goplerud, E., & Hartley, S. (2018, April). *Real Costs of Rx Pain Meds, Opioids and Substance Use in the Workplace: What Employers and Communities Can Do*. Presentation presented at the National Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit, Atlanta, GA.

