

IMPACT OF INCREASED SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS IN THE WORKPLACE

From alcoholism to marijuana use and prescription drug overuse, substance use disorder (SUD) is alarmingly widespread in the workplace today.



BY THE NUMBERS:

~70%

of all adults with an alcohol or illicit drug use disorder are employed. ^[1]

Nearly 9%

of employed adults have a current alcohol or illicit drug use disorder. ^[1]

1 in 12

workers have an untreated substance use disorder. ^[2]

19% of Workers

jobs with a large percentage of male employees have higher rates of SUD - example in construction, 19% of workers suffer from SUD. ^[2]

+40 States

reported increases in substance misuse & opioid-related overdoses due to stress & mental health issues heightened by the lingering pandemic. ^[2]

75%

of employers say their workplaces are impacted by opioid misuse. ^[2]

49%

of American workers were affected by an increase in alcohol and other substances 1 year into the pandemic. ^[3]

Up 31.4%

from all-time low of 3.5% just 10 years ago - more U.S. workers are testing positive for marijuana than ever before. ^[4]

IMPLICATIONS OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUD) ON EMPLOYERS

FINANCIAL

Aside from severely compromising employee health, SUD can impact employers' financial health. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) reports that SUD can cost as much as **\$81 billion** in absenteeism, presenteeism, loss productivity, higher healthcare bills, and workers' compensation claims.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) found substance users cost employers twice as much in workers' compensation and medical expenses. In fact, they're five times more likely to file workers' compensation claims. And, findings from the NSC shows on average, employers pay about \$4,770 in health insurance premiums for employees with SUD versus \$2,900 for those without it.

SAFETY

A greater prevalence of SUD among employees can make the workplace unsafe for everyone. Poor judgement, slower reflexes, and careless errors are some of the byproducts of employee SUD that can be especially costly (and catastrophic) on the job when concentration or the ability to react quickly is absolutely essential (e.g., driving a delivery truck, operating a forklift, climbing a ladder, etc.)

The U.S. Department of Labor claims that [65% of on-the-job accidents](#) are related to drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace.

HOW CAN EMPLOYERS TAKE ACTION?

Despite the growing costs and concern, only [17% of employers](#) think they are well prepared to address the impact of growing SUD on their workplace. Fortunately, an experienced benefit advisor can help. With a wide range of expertise and access to resources, they can offer support that helps you better contain the costs of SUD more confidently by helping you:

- 1 Focus on prevention** and advocating worker well-being.
- 2 Review employee assistance programs (EAP) and health offerings** to make sure they offer robust services, including:
 - Specially trained professionals who can manage instances of SUD
 - Adequate coverage for providing a full range of treatments, from inpatient and outpatient to follow-up care and ongoing support for recovery

According to the [National Safety Council](#), workers in recovery:

- [Miss 13.7 fewer days each year than workers with an untreated SUD](#)
- [Miss 3.6 fewer days than an average employee](#)
- [Help employers avoid \\$8,175 in turnover, replacement, and healthcare costs](#)

- 3 Consider additional support tools** that may be effective for dealing with SUD-afflicted employees.
- 4 Understand the importance of documenting and communicating a drug-free work environment**, a key factor for disputing or denying workers' comp claims where SUD is suspected.
- 5 Be aware of changing laws**, particularly around legalizing cannabis and how marijuana use can effect operations and future workers' comp claims.
- 6 Comply with state and federal discrimination regulations** that protect employees with SUD undergoing treatment.
- 7 Develop programs** that can help you maintain a safe and productive work environment.



Contact us today to discuss ways to help contain costs and keep employees safe.

[Contact Us](#)

[1] [National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

[2] [The National Safety Council](#):

[3] [Occupational Health & Safety \(OH&S\)](#)

[4] [2022 Quest Diagnostic Drug Testing Index \(DTI\)](#)