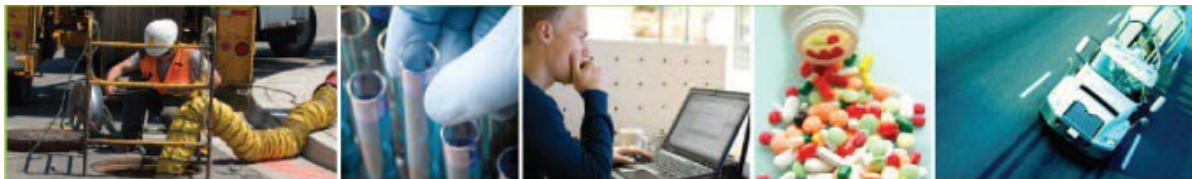# DRUGS DON'T WORK IN NJ

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Substance Use Disorder in the Workplace:
What Employers Need to Know

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According to the National Institute of Health, drug use has increased by 16 percent and alcohol use has increased by 23 percent in the past three years in the United States, with 1 in 11 workers currently suffering from an untreated substance use disorder (SUD). When substance use and addiction are not addressed in the workplace, these disorders are costly and dangerous for organizations, as well as individuals.

Addiction Costs to Businesses and the Reality of SUD in the Workplace

Substance use disorder costs American businesses an average of $81 billion in lost profits every year, attributable to decreased productivity, high employee turnover, increased absenteeism and sick days, and lower quality of work.

- Health insurance premiums are $1,870 more expensive for workers with a SUD than for workers without a drug dependence *(National Safety Council)*
- 15 percent of workers utilize substances during paid hours *(The American Addiction Centers)*

- 65 percent of job-related accidents were associated with substance use, and 40 percent of deaths in the workplace are attributed to employees being intoxicated at time of death *(US Department of Labor)*
- Nearly 75 percent of adults with an untreated substance use disorder are actively employed *(National Survey on Drug Use and Health)*

Workplace solutions can be implemented to mitigate the dangers stemming from SUD both for employees and employers.

Fostering Psychological Safety and a Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace

It is imperative to create a culture of psychological safety within your workplace, as it is widely proven this is a basic and beneficial human need. Psychological safety is defined as the feeling of being able to speak up, take risks and make mistakes without fear of negative consequences.

A psychologically safe environment cultivates a judgement-free culture. When employees feel psychologically safe, they feel more empowered to seek help when they identify a need for it, including with SUD.

Every step forward is a step in the right direction. Here are some simple yet effective steps that can be taken to create this culture.

- Leadership can cultivate their team with care through recognition, celebrating achievements, learning about and appreciating diversity, and identifying internal biases and working to overcome them.
- Within that culture of care, avoid blame culture. While taking responsibility and holding themselves and others accountable is important, it's equally important to approach mistakes with empathy and understanding to help achieve better outcomes moving forward.
- Listen to employees. When feedback and concerns are brought forward, they should be heard and acknowledged. Whether the topics are work-related or physical/mental health-related, handling them with care and compassion helps build the psychological safety of the team.

Identifying Substance Use in the Workplace

There are simple ways you can go about looking for employees who might suffer from an untreated SUD. Some signs to watch for are:

- Missing work or deadlines
- An overall uncharacteristic decrease in productivity
- Physical health changes: dramatic changes in weight, lower energy levels and disheveled or neglected appearance
- Unusual behaviors such as change in temperament

Once identified, the next step is to make sure employees receive the help and support they need.

Employee Assistance Programs

When deployed with proper care and attention, employee assistance programs (EAPs) can help supplement care needed to support those with SUD. According to the World Health Organization, for every $1 organizations put into mental health programs, there is a four-fold return in increased productivity and better health outcomes. These programs fill gaps in care by offering employees additional support in areas including, but not limited to, trauma, financial stress and substance use. These programs are often under-utilized, but that can be rectified by following some basic guidelines.

Educate employees on the EAP that's offered. When people understand what is available and how it can be utilized, they are more likely to participate in the program. Whether this is a company-led annual meeting, an information session led by a representative of the EAP or just a general FAQ, these tools can offer insights and guidance for individuals to utilize on their personal journeys. Promote this internally and make sure to cover the cost to the employee. Misunderstanding the cost can often be a barrier that employees simply will not cross to take advantage of these EAP benefits.

About GoMo Health & Substance Use Specific Engagement Solutions

GoMo Health is proud to introduce a new product, *Recovery Pathways: Workplace*. The digital care management solution is specifically designed for employers to create recovery-friendly and psychologically safe workplaces. Whether you're a concerned employer or an employee touched by substance use in some way, *Recovery Pathways: Workplace* delivers personalized support for each participant from prevention to diagnosis and management.

[Click here](#) to learn more about programs that have successfully improved employment opportunities, quality of life, health and well-being for those touched by a SUD.

GoMo Health® applies a proprietary, evidence-based science of engagement, BehavioralRx®, to our cloud-based digital therapeutic, Concierge Care®, to actively extend care plans, and provide resources and support to people in their "lived" environments – enhancing outpatient care and impact. This outpatient care delivery model integrates support for psychosocial and physical needs to create personalized, behaviorally based care plans that empower patients in their own care management and healthy decision making. Connecting with patients via its Telehealth Triple Play™, GoMo Health uses an intelligent mobile BOT to collect and triage patient data via home medical devices, conduct in the moment "conversations" and gather electronic patient-reported outcomes (ePRO). This has proven to modify behaviors of patients with chronic and complex conditions worldwide, resulting in significant improvement in health outcomes and adherence, and decreased costs of care for providers, hospitals, health plans, employers and life science companies. To learn more, visit www.gomohealth.com.

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The Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey (PDFNJ) is a private 501 (c) (3) not-for profit organization that promotes the prevention of substance abuse throughout the state through media campaigns, school-based programs and community and workplace initiatives. PDFNJ programs are made possible by support from the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, the

For Treatment Information, Call 1-844-Reach NJ or visit <u>www.reachnj.gov</u>