

Addiction in the Workplace

Right now, an estimated 23 million Americans are suffering from drug and alcohol addiction. Drug addiction costs the American economy more than \$180 billion every year. Adding in the costs of alcohol addiction, the costs reach several hundred billion.¹

Impact

Substance use results in higher workplace costs.

- Lost productivity due to alcohol use costs businesses more than \$130 billion a year.²
- Health care costs for employees with untreated alcohol addiction problems cost nearly twice as much for those of other employees.³
- Substance use by employees can also increase absenteeism, reduce job productivity and performance, and increase the numbers of workers' compensation and disability claims.

Employee Assistance Programs

To address these issues, many U.S. businesses offer Employee Assistance Programs.

- Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are employee benefit programs designed to help identify and resolve productivity problems affecting employees who are impaired by personal concerns. EAPs come in many different forms, from telephone-based services to on-site programs. Face-to-face programs provide more comprehensive services for employees with substance use disorders, including screening, treatment referrals, and follow-up care.

Employers see significant savings when EAPs address substance use.

- 80 percent of federal workers and their family members who received treatment for alcohol or drug problems through the Federal Occupational Health EAP reported improvements in work attendance⁴.
- Gillette Company saw a 75% drop in inpatient substance use treatment costs after implementing an EAP⁵.

By offering EAPs with substance use components, employers can reduce absenteeism, improve employee health and job performance, and reduce health care costs.

¹ National Institutes of Health, National Institutes on Drug Abuse, "NIDA InfoFacts: Treatment Approaches for Drug Addiction." <http://www.nida.nih.gov/infofacts/treatmeth.html>

² "Economic Benefits of Drug Treatment: A Critical Review of the Evidence for Policy Makers," February 2005.

³ Substance Abuse: The Nation's Number One Health Problem, February 2001.

<http://www.rwjf.org/files/publications/other/SubstanceAbuseChartbook.pdf>

⁴ "EAP Impact on Work, Relationships, and Health Outcomes." *Journal of Employee Assistance, Second Quarter 2004.*

⁵ "Cost-Effectiveness and Prevention Implications of EAPs," U.S. DHHS, SAMHSA.