



DRUG & ALCOHOL FACT AWARENESS

One of my employee's told me his doctor prescribed prescription pain killers. Should I be concerned about safety in the workplace?

The last week in January is 'Drug & Alcohol Facts Awareness' week making this a timely question. The US is in the middle of an opioid and heroin epidemic which is killing ever increasing numbers of Americans at an astonishing rate. In 2015, over 30,000 people died from heroin and opioids (also called narcotic prescription painkillers), exceeding those who died from car accidents during the same year, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Unfortunately conflicts of interest color pain treatment and big pharmaceutical firm's money

appears responsible for loosening US drug policies. A cursory web search on the topic rapidly reveals the foxes appear to be guarding the hen house door in too many situations.

Many Americans fail to realize that opioid prescription painkillers are very similar to heroin and, like heroin, depress your heart rate and breathing. Large doses can cause sedation and slowed breathing to the point that breathing stops altogether, resulting in death. The aging population and youth are most dramatically affected by the over prescription of these pain killers. High school heroin use starts with painkillers in 3 out of 4 cases, says other recent research. People who end up using heroin "rarely just start with heroin," (Joseph Palamar, Ph.D.,

public health expert at NYU Langone Medical Center, New York, NY.)

Certainly impairment by these powerfully addictive chemicals is an issue of concern for health and safety in all work environments. The gateway to this addiction epidemic is prescription pain killers. This requires due diligence to have a physician's statement noting the employee is "fit for duty" to return to work if prescribed the opioid pain medication. If the workplace responsibilities are deemed 'safety sensitive' the workplace may consider requiring a physician to clear the employee for specific safety sensitive job duties.

Leadership Orientation Session B

Watch for Upcoming Class
Schedules

CONTACT US TODAY:

Please contact our office by calling 800-779-6125 or e-mailing Joy (joy@connectionseap.com) for more information or register online at:

www.connectionseap.com

ATTENTION: SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS, ADMINISTRATORS:

Session A: "Leadership Orientation to the EAP", is always available on the website - for new leadership employees or as a refresher course.

Each employer has their own unique user name and password for the leadership section and also a username and password for the employee section. Please check your wallet cards or contact your HR department for your username and password.

Website Information – Webinars, skill builders, articles and much more are available in the Work/Life Services site. Log in on Connections website, and you will find this site in the drop down menus under Employee or Leadership Resources. (To access webinars, continue to scroll down on the Work/Life Services opening page. All webinars are archived for later viewing.)

Information provided in LEADERSHIP and the EAP is for general information purposes only and is not intended to be specific guidance for any particular supervisor or human resource management concern. For specific guidance on handling individual employee concerns, consult with an EAP counselor.

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