



IS YOUR EMPLOYEE FIT FOR DUTY?

I have heard about the epidemic of pain killer abuse. One of my employees shared his frustration upon discovering his elderly mother was having a lot of health problems; a direct side effect of addiction to her pain pills. Could this also impact health and safety in our 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.

Unfortunately, conflicts of interest color pain treatment and big pharmaceutical firm's money appear responsible for loosening USA drug policies.

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 prescription painkillers diverted to an underground street enterprise in 3 out of 4 cases.

People who end up using heroin "rarely just start with heroin," (Joseph Palamar, Ph.D., 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

*Please watch for upcoming classes.

CONTACT US TODAY:

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ATTENTION: SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS, ADMINISTRATORS:

Session A: "Leadership Orientation to the EAP", is always available on the website. Please check your wallet cards or contact your HR department for your username and password.

Website Information – Webinars and skill builders are available in the Work/Life Services site. Log in on Connections website go to Employee or Leadership Resources tab to access webinars, continue to scroll down on the Work/Life Services opening page. (All webinars are archived for later viewing.)

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