



National Survey Highlights

Substance abuse and addiction is one of the most serious issues facing companies today, but employer policies and practices for addressing the issue don't match the severity of the problem.

- More than two-thirds (67 percent) of HR professionals believe that substance abuse and addiction is one of the most serious issues they face in their company.
- While most companies have policies and employee assistance programs in place (77 percent have a drug testing policy/program and 58 percent offer an employee assistance program), few HR professionals (22 percent) believe their companies openly and proactively deal with employee substance abuse and addiction issues.

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

HR professionals are facing major barriers in helping their employees with substance abuse and addiction issues.

- More than half (54 percent) of HR professionals believe that getting employees to acknowledge or talk about the issue is their toughest challenge.
- Forty-two percent of all HR professionals cited at least one of four of the following as personal hurdles to helping their employees with substance abuse and addiction issues:
 - lack of experience in identifying substance abuse and addiction (20 percent);
 - lack of information regarding treatment options (16 percent);
 - personal discomfort in approaching employees about the issue (13 percent);
 - not having enough time to deal with substance abuse and addiction issues (13 percent).

HR professionals want help addressing substance abuse and addiction in the workplace.

- Eighty-five percent of HR professionals believe that offering education programs to build understanding of and how best to address addiction in the workplace would be an effective component of a program to deal with substance abuse and addiction issues.
- HR professionals said they would benefit most from information on how to:
 - identify substance abuse and addiction in the workplace (32 percent);
 - discuss the issues with their employees (25 percent);
 - choose the most effective treatment options for their employees (19 percent).

IMPACTING THE BUSINESS

Employee substance abuse and addiction can have a negative impact on a business.

- HR professional reported that the most significant problems their companies experience due to employee substance abuse and addiction were:
 - absenteeism (62 percent);
 - reduced productivity (49 percent);
 - lack of trustworthiness (39 percent);
 - negative impact on the company's external reputation (32 percent);
 - missed deadlines (31 percent);
 - increased health care costs (29 percent);
 - unpredictable, defensive interpersonal relations (29 percent).

Effective treatment programs for employee substance abuse and addiction are invaluable to a business' long-term success.

- An overwhelming majority of HR professionals (92 percent) agree that an effective treatment program increases employee productivity.
- Two thirds (67 percent) of HR professionals believe that access to an effective treatment program reduces overall health care costs for employers.

TROUBLE WITH TESTING

Traditional systems for recognizing substance abuse and addiction may not work as well as HR professionals believe.

- Eighty-five percent of HR professionals believe that drug testing is an effective way to diagnose workplace substance abuse and addiction. However, research from the National Institute on Drug Abuse and Addiction shows that 69 percent of substance abusers or addicts in 2005 used alcohol, which can go undetected through drug testing alone.

STIGMA OF ADDICTION REMAINS

Addiction issues may make new hires less attractive, but do not deter commitment to current employees.

- HR professionals are divided on whether or not their company would be less interested in hiring a recovering addict. Forty-three percent agree that their company would be less likely to hire a recovering addict, compared to 47 percent who disagree.

HR professionals see a growing issue for women with regard to substance abuse and addiction.

- More than half (56 percent) of HR professionals believe addiction among women has increased over the last five years.
- HR professionals believe the major barriers preventing women from getting treatment are:
 - fear of losing custody of their children (75 percent);
 - reluctance to admit their addiction (68 percent);
 - fear that their employers (62 percent) and their families (58 percent) will find out.

About the survey: The Hazelden Foundation commissioned KRC Research to conduct 306 telephone interviews with senior human resources professionals nationwide between September 25 and October 12, 2006. The margin of error is +/- 5.6 percent.