

Substance Abuse Management Strategies: Guidance for Employers

To help employers develop effective substance abuse management strategies for their workforces, IBI sought input from experts at leading healthcare, benefits and absence management firms. A summary of their guidance follows.



UNDERSTAND YOUR RISKS

Use confidential health risk assessments to identify employee issues and medications with potential for abuse.

Work with your group health carrier or pharmacy benefits manager to track overall spending and trends for opioids.



RAISE AWARENESS IN YOUR WORKFORCE

Provide workplace training and education for managers in identifying potentially problematic behavior.

Educate employees about the resources available to them.

Publish a formal drug-free workplace policy statement with specific references to opioids.



LEVERAGE PARTNERS' EXPERTISE

Confirm that partners responsible for disability, absence management and stay-at-work/return-to-work programs have direct clinical expertise with substance use disorders and chronic pain issues.

Ensure that drug testing procedures are conducted by federally certified labs that screen for opioids.

Enlist partners to ensure that your policies conform to federal, state, and local regulations.



ENSURE THAT EMPLOYEES GET NEEDED TREATMENT FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Utilize evidence-based treatments, including cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, brief interventions, relapse prevention, community reinforcement approaches, contingency management and pharmacological treatments.



PREVENT PAIN MANAGEMENT FROM BECOMING ABUSE

Identify injured employees with risk factors and respond immediately to workplace injuries.

Coordinate a post-injury plan with the employee and use return-to work strategies.

Work with your pharmacy benefits manager to ensure pain medications comply with opioid prescribing guidelines.

Read the full guidance, as well as the report: Opioids, Pain and Absence: The Productivity Implications of Substance Use Among U.S. Workers on ibiweb.org/opioids-pain-and-absence