Opioid Abuse Stats & Facts



FACTS

1. For the first time in U.S. history, a person is more likely to die from an accidental opioid overdose than from a motor vehicle crash.
2. Appropriate prescribing of opioids is essential to protecting the health and safety of Medicare beneficiaries. One in three Medicare Part D beneficiaries received a prescription opioid in 2016.
3. Only half of employers are very confident that they have the appropriate HR policies and resources to deal with opioid use and misuse in the workplace.
4. Employers are more concerned about hiring qualified workers, and employee benefits and worker compensation costs than they are about employee use of legal prescription opioids or illicit use/sale of opioids.
5. Misuse of prescription opioids among high school seniors is at its lowest rate since the survey began assessing it.

STATS

- The US is in the midst of an opioid overdose epidemic. Opioids (including prescription opioids, heroin, and fentanyl) killed more than 47,600 people in 2017, more than any year on record. 37% of all opioid overdose deaths involve a prescription opioid.
- 95% – In 2017, 95% of the 70,067 US drug overdose deaths occurred among the working age population, persons aged 15-64 years. It is unknown how many were employed at the time of their death.
- 8% – According to the National Survey of Drug Use and Health, an estimated 3.8% of respondents age 18 years or older reported illicit opioid use in the past year. An estimated 63.0% of these self-reported illicit opioid users were employed full- or part-time.
- 25% – The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that overdose deaths at work from non-medical use of drugs or alcohol increased by at least 25% annually between 2013 and 2017. The 272 workplace overdose deaths reported in 2017 accounted for 5.3% of occupational injury deaths that year, as compared to 1.8% in 2013. It is unknown how many of these deaths were caused by opioids specifically.
- In a NIOSH analysis of BLS data for the years 2011 to 2016, 43% of drug overdose deaths at work occurred in only three industries – Transportation & Warehousing, Construction, and Healthcare & Social Assistance.
- 8 days – Workers with a current substance use disorder miss an average of 14.8 days per year, while the subset with a pain medication use disorder miss an average of 29 days per year. This is in contrast to an average of 10.5 days for

most employees, and an average 9.5 days for workers in recovery from a substance use disorder.
- Emergency department visits for opioid overdoses rose 30% in all parts of the US from July 2016 through September 2017.
- More than 760,000 people have died since 1999 from a drug overdose. Two out of three drug overdose deaths in 2018 involved an opioid.