

Rimrock Foundation
1231 N. 29th St. Billings, MT 59101
(406) 248-3175 1-800-227-3953
www.rimrock.org

A CORPORATE RESPONSE TO ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTION

"We have been tracking our employees who are identified as having participated in drug and alcohol programs for eight years. Our statistics indicate that two years following treatment, 730% of employees were still drug- or alcohol-free and productively employed at Chevron. This translates into a cost savings for Chevron of around \$6.00 for every \$1.00 spent on intervention and rehabilitation. The simple fact is that alcohol and drug treatment is not just good for employees, it is essential for businesses that want to remain productive, safe, and successful.

*John Dillon Riley Ph.D., Manager Employee Assistance Program,
Chevron Corporation, San Francisco*

A Call to Action

In 1997, about 134 million people were employed, many at medium and large companies across the nation. Unfortunately, in 1997 nearly 14 million Americans were current illicit drug users, and nearly three-quarters of these users were employed in American businesses. The economic and human costs of drug and alcohol use are alarming. The National Institutes of Health reported that alcohol and drug abuse cost the economy \$246 billion in 1992. In addition, numerous studies indicate that substance abuse is having a profoundly negative effect on the workplace. For example, in 1994, full-time workers aged 18 to 49 who reported current illicit drug use were more likely than those reporting no current illicit drug use to indicate that they had worked for three or more employers in the past year, missed work in the past month, voluntarily left an employer in the past year, or been fired by an employer in the past year. Similar results were reported for employees who were heavy alcohol users.

Many corporations have already taken steps to address this critical issue by establishing employee assistance programs (EAPs) to assist employees with problems that affect their job performance, such as alcohol and drug abuse, as well as stress, marital difficulties, financial trouble, and legal problems. Most EAPs offer a range of services, including employee education, individual and organizational assessment, counseling, and referrals to treatment. Whichever way a company chooses to address the issue of addiction among employees, research has shown that substance abuse treatment results in a significant reduction in medical claims, absenteeism, and disability; an increase in productivity; and a healthier and safer environment for all employees. For example:

- > General Motors Corporation's EAP saves the company \$37 million per year in lost productivity and \$3,700 for each of the 10,000 employees enrolled in the program.
- > United Airlines estimates that it has a \$16.95 return in the form of higher productivity for every dollar invested in employee assistance.
- > Northrop Corporation saw productivity increase 43 percent in the first 100 employees to enter an alcohol treatment program. After 3 years of sobriety, savings per rehabilitated employee approached \$20,000.
- > Oldsmobile's Lansing, Michigan, plant saw the following results one year after employees with alcoholism problems received treatment: lost man-hours declined by 49 percent, health care benefit costs by 29 percent, absences by 56 percent, grievances by 78 percent, disciplinary problems by 63

percent, and accidents by 82 percent.

In 1995, the average annual costs of EAP services per eligible employee nationwide was \$26.59 for internal programs staffed by company employees and \$21.47 for programs provided by an outside contractor. These costs compare favorably with the expense of recruiting and training replacements for employees terminated because of substance abuse problems about \$50,000 per employee at corporations such as IBM.

Getting Involved - Next Steps

- Announce that prevention and treatment of alcohol and drug problems are a major corporate focus and that you want everyone to take part in this collective effort, including unions, where applicable.
- Establish a comprehensive workplace substance abuse treatment program to reflect your company's commitment to operating and maintaining a work environment free of substance abuse. There are some standard program components to consider: a written substance abuse policy, supervisor training for implementing a drug-free workplace program, employee education and awareness, an EAP to help employees with personal problems, and drug testing.
- Fully explain the benefits and procedures of your drug-free workplace program or policy to all employees.
- Help supervisors and managers understand the value of treatment and recovery. Rather than firing employees with addictions, offer training for managers on their specific responsibilities for helping carry out the workplace policy and program.
- Go public about your program. Publicize your efforts through the local media to promote your company as a concerned corporate citizen.
- Provide pro bono services or encourage employees to volunteer at a local treatment facility in your community.

Successful Programs

Mobil Corporation has a drug and alcohol abuse policy in place that states that employees seeking treatment would not find their jobs in jeopardy if they complied with medically specified treatment and rehabilitation. Mobil also offers a wide range of workplace programs, including drug and alcohol testing and worker assistance. The comprehensive program includes a confidential self-referral service that allows employees at all levels to contact an employee assistance professional to discuss drug or alcohol problems. According to James Barnshaw, M.D., medical director of field services at Mobil Medical, which oversees the company's substance abuse treatment effort, the program has been successful in rehabilitating workers so they return to work. He said 70 to 85 percent of employees return to work without suffering a relapse. "There is a general feeling that Mobil's program is effective, and that energizes us," Barnshaw said.

"Healthy companies require healthy employees. To be competitive in today's global market, corporations must increase productivity. One way to achieve this goal is by addressing the issue of substance abuse in the workplace. Employee assistance programs provide a resource for those who suffer from addiction to recover and regain their place as productive members of the work force and the community. This is one of many reasons why EAPs are good investments for employers."

Lynne DeCrande, ACSW CEAP Senior Consultant, General Motors

Marriott Hotel Resorts Suites (MHRS) of Marriott International has assembled a formal substance abuse policy that includes pre-employment testing, support, and referral information that can be tailored for use by its member hotels on the basis of their specific needs. The policy has yielded

impressive results, including a decrease in accidents and staff turnover. Individual hotel general managers are provided numerous options in implementing substance abuse programs. Some have enacted formal employee assistance programs and referral services, while others rely on public sector services. According to Jeff Hayes, MHRS Division Director of Assets Protection at Marriott's Corporate Headquarters, "A stable, contributing workforce in a healthy work environment consistently delivers quality service to customers and to each other."

Employee Assistance Program

"Worksite substance abuse programs can help employers assist their employees with a substance abuse problem by identifying, treating and restoring them to productivity at work and in their communities."

Elena Carr Substance Abuse Program Coordinator, Department of Labor

Additional Resources

Employee Assistance Professionals Association
2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22201
703-522-6272

Employee Assistance Society of North America
435 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1717
Chicago, IL 60611-4067
312- 644-0828

Institute for a Drug-Free Workplace
1225 I Street, N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005
202-842-7400

Drug-Free Workplace Network
1126 South 70th Street, Suite 116
West Allis, WI 53214
414-475-2310

Working Partners for an Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room S-23 12
Washington, DC 20210
202-219-6001, ext. 152 or 137
The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention's Workplace Helpline
800-WORKPLACE