

# OREGON EMPLOYER DRUG-FREE INITIATIVE



- **Most substance abusers are employed – over 90% of alcoholics and 77% of drug addicts** (National Institute on Drug Abuse, Dept. of Health & Human Services)
- **Each substance-abusing employee costs his or her employer \$7,000 - \$25,000** (Small Business Administration)
- **Only 12% of Oregon businesses have comprehensive drug-free workplace programs in place** (Drug-free Workplace Programs: Survey of Oregon Businesses 2008, Oregon Employment Dept.)

## ECONorthwest Estimates That in 2006, Substance Abuse Cost the Oregon Economy \$5.9 Billion

### Background

Oregon Employer Drug-Free Initiative (OEDI) is a statewide business initiative to substantially increase the number of drug-free workplaces in Oregon and improve the competitive advantage of Oregon employers. It was approved as an Oregon Business Plan initiative in January 2006 as part of the Meet Targeted Workforce Needs of Industry initiative.

Since then, OEDI has mounted a business-driven campaign to inform the full business community of the value of drug-free workplace programs and assist them in launching or fully implementing these programs. The campaign, implemented by 15 chamber of commerce or local business group partners, focuses on helping smaller businesses overcome such obstacles as lack of time, lack of money, lack of expertise and the fear of losing key employees.

## The Overall Goal of OEDI is to Substantially Increase the Number of Drugfree Workplaces Statewide.

### Specific Goals

- Educate and mobilize the business community to combat substance abuse through a business-to-business awareness and education campaign;
- Raise legislator awareness of the impact of drugs on workplace safety and productivity;
- Prioritize substance abuse prevention in Oregon's public workforce system; and
- Elevate importance of student preparation for the drug-free workplace.

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Please visit [www.oregonemployerdrugfree.org](http://www.oregonemployerdrugfree.org) for more information.

## Scope of Substance Abuse Problem Nationally and in Oregon

**In 2006, Substance Abuse Cost the Oregon Economy \$5.9 Billion (ECONorthwest).**

### **Breakdown:**

- \$813 million in healthcare costs and alcohol and drug abuse programs
- \$4.15 billion in lost earnings as a result of foregone productivity of users and by victims of crimes
- \$967 million in other costs, such as crime, criminal justice and social welfare programs, and property damages
- Alcohol abuse alone cost Oregon's economy approximately \$3.244 billion in 2006. A large number by any measure, it is approximately **eight times** greater than the \$395 million in tax revenues collected in fiscal year 2006 from the sale of alcohol.
- The economic costs of drug abuse were approximately \$2.686 billion in 2006 or 45 percent of the total economic costs of substance abuse in the state.
- On average, the total economic costs of alcohol and drug abuse in Oregon in 2006 was approximately **\$1,600 per person**.
- To put substance abuse costs into perspective, the \$5.9 billion in economic costs represents approximately **4 percent of Oregon's gross state product** in 2006.

## Substance Use & Abuse in America Today\*

- 20.4 million Americans aged 12 or older (8.3% of population) are current illicit drug users
- 15 million Americans (6.1% of population) regularly abuse alcohol
- Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug (14.8 million users or 6% of population)
  - 2.4 million current cocaine users
  - 731,000 current users of methamphetamine
- Among youths aged 12 to 17, illicit drug use rates declined significantly from 11.6% in 2002 to 9.8% in 2006
  - Marijuana use by ages 12-17 dropped from 8.2% to 6.7%
  - Marijuana use by ages 18-25 dropped from 17.3% to 16.3%
- More than one fifth (57 million) of Americans aged 12 or older participated in binge drinking (five or more drinks on the same occasion)
  - 42.2% by young adults ages 18-25
  - 16.6% by youth ages 12-17
- The drug problems at schools are getting worse:
  - 61% of teens say they attend high schools with drug problems (up from 44% in 2002)
  - 31% of middle-schoolers say they attend middle schools with drug problems (up from 19% in 2002)
  - 4 in five teens in high school say they have witnessed the use, sale or possession of illegal drugs on high school grounds, or seen someone who was high or drunk

\*Sources: 2006 NSDUH Survey, SAMHSA, CASA

## Substance Use and Abuse Among Workers Nationally\*

- The vast majority of drug users are employed full or part time (74.8%)
- Most binge drinkers and heavy alcohol users are employed full or part time (79.4%) Current usage rates by full-time workers is increasing:
  - 8.2% (9.4 million) of full-time workers used illicit drugs in the past month (up from 7.7% or 8.8 million workers in 1997)
  - 8.8 % (10.1 million) of full-time workers used alcohol heavily in the past month
- National estimates indicate that 10% of the workforce (11.4 million workers) bring substance abuse problems into the workplace
- In excess of 30% of those unemployed (2.5 million workers) have severe substance abuse problems
- About 60% of firms with hiring difficulties felt that finding workers without a history of substance abuse problems was the cause of their hiring difficulties
- 40% of workplace fatalities and 47% of workplace injuries are linked to substance abuse
- 10-20% of the workers who die on the job test positive for alcohol or other drugs
- Alcohol and drug abuse cost the American economy \$81 billion annually in lost productivity
- Among adults ages 18-64 employed full time, 10.6% had a past year substance abuse disorder
- Food service (17%) and construction workers (15%) showed highest prevalence of past month illicit drug use among major occupational groups
- Construction (17%) and installation/repair (15%) showed highest prevalence of past month heavy alcohol use
- One in five workers report having been put in danger, having been injured, or having to work harder, re-do work, or cover for a co-worker as a result of a fellow employee's drinking
- More than one third of workers report being distracted, less productive, or absent from work because of alcohol or other drug addiction in their family
- Almost 9 in 10 of employed illicit drug users and over 8 in 10 employed heavy drinkers work for small and medium sized firms
- About 43% of full time workers report prehire testing and 30% report random testing at their places of employment
- More than half of U.S. workers reported it would make no difference to them if an employer tests randomly
  - 39.8% reported they would be more likely to work for such an employer
  - 8.7% reported they would be less likely to work for such an employer.

## Substance Use & Abuse in Oregon\*

- Oregon's per capita drug use exceeded the national per capita average in 2006, with Oregonians most using marijuana, methamphetamine and illicit painkillers and stimulants
- While local methamphetamine lab seizures have continued to decrease, addiction to meth remains widespread due to imports from labs in Mexico and in other states
- Oregon is listed as one of the top seven marijuana-producing states in the country, with large outdoor marijuana grows discovered on public and private property
- Law enforcement eradicated six times the amount of outdoor marijuana plants in 2007 than in 2005
- Oregonians lead the nation in abuse of prescription drugs and are showing up at treatment centers in larger numbers than users of meth, cocaine and heroin combined
- Treatment admissions in Oregon for illicit prescription drugs increased 332% in past 10 years
- Drug-related deaths increased eight percent statewide in 2007
- Law enforcement has identified 140 drug-trafficking organizations in Oregon
- Oregon adults have higher rates of alcohol use and heavy drinking than the nation for all age categories over 21 years
- 41% of Oregon's motor vehicle fatalities involved alcohol, a rate unchanged for past 10 years
- 30% of physical assaults, 23% of sexual assaults, and 3% of robberies are attributable to alcohol; and well over 50% of property crimes are linked to drug and alcohol abuse
- The vast majority of inmates (75-85%) have substance abuse problems ranging from moderate to severe addiction
- 62.4% of children placed in foster care in Oregon were removed from their home because of parent drug abuse
- Alcohol use by Oregon 8th graders is 76% higher than nationally (30% in Oregon vs. 17% nationally)
- One of every four 11th graders (11,295 of 45,179) and one of every eight 8th graders (5,631 of 43,312) report binge drinking
- One of 20 Oregon youth ages 12-17 and one of 10 young adults ages 18-25 abuse or are dependent upon one or more illicit drugs
- 8th and 11th graders in Oregon are more likely to smoke marijuana than cigarettes
- Over 302,000 Oregonians or almost 1 in 10 are in need of treatment
- In excess of 37,000 Oregonians in publicly-funded treatment are unemployed and their substance abuse problem may make it difficult to obtain employment

\*Sources: Oregon DHS, SEOW 2007, AOCMHP, Workdrugfree Oregon

## Substance Use & Abuse Among Oregon Workers\*

- Oregon's drug test failure rate has consistently ranged from 5% to 6% and in some locales, smaller businesses report a 60-80% pre-hire failure rate
- Oregon's drug test failure rate (5%) is higher than the national drug test failure rate (4.4%).
- Marijuana usage is by far the most prevalent reason for testing failure (76% of all positive tests in Oregon vs. 54% nationally)
- Businesses in five of nine Oregon Business Plan bus tour stops in 2005 reported drug use was a key obstacle to hiring otherwise qualified workers
- Only 12% of Oregon businesses with at least 3 employees have in place the five components of a drugfree workplace program (policy, supervisor training, employee education, employee assistance program and drug testing)
- Businesses implementing a drug-free workplace program report improved workplace safety and increased productivity
- Small employers who have not implemented the program are confident they do not require the program since they have so few employees. They also cite cost and fear of losing key employees as barriers.

Sources: Oregon Medical Labs; Oregon Business Plan; Drug-free Workplace Programs: Survey of Oregon Businesses 2008

## Abuse of Oregon's Medical Marijuana Program

- As of Jan. 2009: 209,842 patient cards, 10,424 caregiver cards, and 2,847 Oregon-licensed physicians who have signed applications for cards.
- Only 500 applications annually were predicted when OMMA was passed in 1998
- Dept. of Justice survey estimated 40% of growers have violated one or more laws, often growing more than the six mature plants allowed per patient
- Oregon State Police report 15 of 46 illegal crop seizures in 2006 involved medical marijuana growers; 40 lbs were seized in a single traffic stop
- Curry, Coos and Josephine Counties have highest concentration of cardholders (1 in 100 residents), nearly 3 times that of Portland tri-county area
- Convicted drug dealers have been allowed to have patient cards and grower cards
- Cards are being issued for common afflictions such as asthma, muscle pain and menstrual cramps
- 18,348 cardholders claim their use is for debilitating "severe pain"
- Douglas County drug task force seized 281 plants and 1687 pounds of processed cannabis with street value of \$4 million from 25 cardholders in 2006

\*Sources: Oregon Medical Marijuana Program, Legacy Metrolab, Oregon Medical Laboratories