

OPIOIDS IN THE WORKFORCE

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Brandeis Opioid Policy Research Collaborative

Devastating Impact of Opioid Epidemic

EMPLOYERS

EMPLOYEES

DEPENDENTS

Extent of the problem

Current employer environment

Five programs in Massachusetts

Best practices and recommendations

Approach and Themes

Approach:

- Literature review
- 38 interviews with 7 key stakeholder groups

Themes:

- Employers' uncertainty on how to address the epidemic in the workplace
- Need for tailored, workforce-specific solutions, promoted by leadership
- Prevalence of stigma: substance use disorders and medications for addiction treatment

Employers are concerned but:



Are unsure about impact on their workforce



Question whose responsibility it is



Perceive that financial impact has been small



Recognize that breadth of epidemic requires new ways to help workers remain in workforce

FACT: In 2016, 55% of persons with OUD were employed full time & 37% of non-elderly with OUD were covered by commercial insurance

Employers Report that Opioid Epidemic:

Limits number of people able to work

Contributes to absenteeism

Leads to impaired or decreased job performance

Impacts dependents

FACT: 50% of working age white men who were out of the labor force report chronic pain and daily use of opioid pain medications

Employers Vary In:

- Awareness of opioid and addiction issues
- Programming provided to employees and dependents
- Understanding of how their industry is impacted

FACT:	Massachusetts Industry	Overdose Deaths (per 100,000)
	Construction	124.9
	Agriculture/Fishing	107.5
	Transportation	48.3
	State Average	25.1

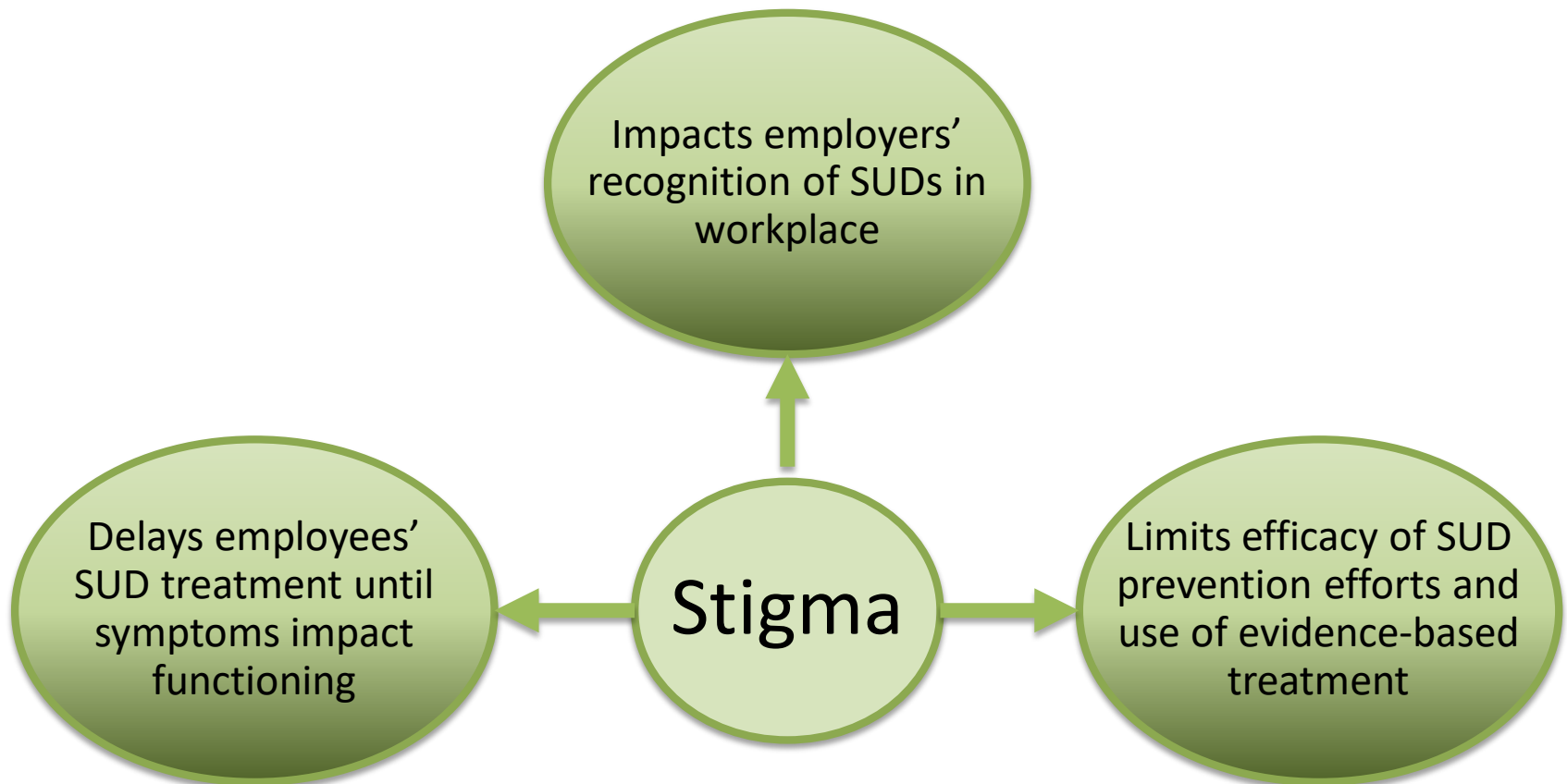
Cost and Consequences are High

Employers face increased health care claims costs due to opioid use

Cost of workers' compensation claims also higher due to opioid use

FACT: Large employer plans alone spent \$2.6 billion on OUD related costs in 2016, an increase of nearly \$2 billion or 307% since 2009

Stigma Plays a Powerful Role in the Workplace



FACT: Almost all interviewees identified stigma and shame as a major barrier to success

Employers are Developing Strategies

Offering services in the workplace

Employee awareness programs
and stigma reduction

Overdose prevention

Adapting traditional health benefits to address opioids through insurers and benefit managers

Limiting
initial and
high-dose
exposure
to opioids

Pain
management
programs

Minimizing/
eliminating
barriers to
treatment

Increasing
access &
use of
in-network
providers

Supporting
awareness
and
acceptance
of MAT

Special
attention to
dependents

Five Innovative Programs in MA



Boston Medical Center



Fishing Partnership Support Services



Seafood Sam's



New England Carpenter's Benefit Fund



General Electric & GE Foundation

Innovation Themes



Key questions:



- How did they start?
- What does it take?
- What elements do they share?

Common elements:



- Strong leadership support
- Anti-stigma component
- Understanding of work and issues in organization or profession
- Aimed at human dilemmas of addiction & recovery

Leadership decision to focus on addiction issues of employees and families, as well as patients

BMC's actions to address opioids:

- Raising awareness through employee story-telling and presentation
- Taking a pledge
- Analyzing the economic burden
- Understanding impact of SUDs & utilization of benefits
- Putting data into action
 - Benefit guide to behavioral health benefits
 - Promoting use of EAP
- Developing Employer Resource Library to help other employers

FISHING PARTNERSHIP



S U P P O R T S E R V I C E S

An Industry and its Workers Provide Integrated Prevention and Support for Recovery

Provides comprehensive support services for fishermen & their families

Services tailored to address issues of a hazardous occupation where workers are mostly independent contractors

Fishing Partnership's actions that address opioids:

Safety training

Opioid awareness training

Naloxone training

Fishing Partnership Navigators

Community and family outreach

Opioid treatment tailored to meet the needs of fishermen



Hands-on and Personal

Seafood Sam's, a seasonal seafood restaurant in Falmouth

Passionate advocate in recovery provides support for recovery in a local business

Employs many young people in early stages of recovery



What's different at Seafood Sam's?

Real opportunity for non-stigmatizing recovery in the workplace – 1 out of 5 employees in recovery

Owner brings personal experience and understanding to situation

Employees held accountable for following recovery plans, given flexibility to attend treatment appointments

Advocates for better pain management education and supports MAT, abstinence-based treatment and recovery coaches

Provides longer-term employment and engagement for better outcomes – employees stay 5 years on average

The New England Carpenters Benefit Fund (NECBF)

Discovering and Encouraging the Best Treatments for Carpenters



Offers self-insured health benefits to 22,000 members and retirees

With BCBSMA, learned prevalence of BH and SUD's was much higher than other plans

To address issues, NECBF:

- Reduced low-quality out-of-network utilization and costs; decreased spending by over \$1m/year
- Increased access to care
- Supports continuing care through Carpenters Assistance Program in-house EAP
- Educates carpenters, families, stewards, and employers about addiction as a disease and availability of resources

General Electric and the GE Foundation

A Big Company Educates, Listens, and Responds to Employees



GE Foundation

\$15m, multi-year commitment to expand treatment access for people with SUD

- Integrate evidence-based medication assisted treatment into primary care practices
- Reduce stigma



GE working to support employees and family members struggling with SUD's, includes:

- Employees Raising Awareness events developed by GE aviation employees
 - Led to SUD support group led by employees w/ EAP
 - Event Toolkit now being shared with other GE sites
- Educating managers and employees
- Shatterproof Addiction Wellness at Work - online resource
- Expanding access through benefit changes
- Scaling up efforts across many international locations

Recommendations



- 1. Enhance employee benefits:
offer intervention points and best practices**
- 2. Add pharmacy benefit managers**
- 3. Cover alternative pain management options**
- 4. Identify and treat people with OUD**
- 5. Cover medications for addiction treatment**
- 6. Utilize Employee Assistance Programs**
- 7. Be proactive with workers' compensation and disability insurance**
- 8. Help employers get started**
- 9. Create opportunities to coordinate across public and private sectors**
- 10. Tailor interventions to specific workplace needs**

Employers Have a Unique Opportunity to Help Address the Opioid Crisis in Massachusetts

Continue to implement and improve effective approaches to prevention, identification, and treatment of OUD

Create workplaces free of stigma

Support long-term recovery

OPIODS



HELP

SUPPORT

THANK YOU!

ADVICE

GUIDANCE