

**P A R S E**  
**NYS Coalition to**  
**Prevent Addiction and Support Recovery in Employment**

**Mission Statement**

*We are committed to creating a culture of recovery-supportive workplaces within New York State that actively develops resources for preventing substance use and addiction.*

**Employers hold a key role in combatting the opioid and substance use crisis!**

***PARSE Overarching Goal:*** Establishment of a broad-based coalition **INCLUDING EMPLOYERS** committed to attacking the opioid and substance use crisis in the workplace.

***Background:*** The workplace is often the forgotten link in the national and state response to the opioid crisis. Seventy percent of the 11.5 million people who misused prescription opioids were employed full or part time according to SAMHSA (2017).

Ignoring substance use in the workplace is very costly to workers, families, and employers. Educating employers, unions, and other workplace stakeholders about the value of establishing a recovery supportive workplace program is a key task in fighting the opioid crisis.

***Employment as a Social Determinant of Health.*** Jobs give people a purpose, a routine, and provide funding for housing, food, and living and access to medical care.

***Recovery Supportive Workplaces*** support their communities by recognizing recovery from substance use disorder as a strength and by being willing to work intentionally with people in recovery. RSW's encourage a healthy and safe environment where employers, employees, and communities can collaborate to create positive change and eliminate barriers for those impacted by addiction.

***Recovery Supportive Workplaces***

**Primary Prevention in Employment:** work to prevent initiation of new cases of substance misuse by promoting healthy and safe work environments for all workers. Work related injuries can result in prescription of opioids and lead to addiction. Workers' Compensation carriers often challenge work relatedness, diagnoses, and treatment of injuries. These challenges result in delays of wage replacement and medical treatment benefits and require representation by workers' compensation attorneys at administrative hearings. Meanwhile, injured workers have to cope with physical and emotional pain. Workplace stress, worsened during the pandemic, is also associated with self-medication. Reducing job hazards and stressors that may lead to substance misuse is primary prevention.

**Secondary Prevention in Employment** provides injured workers information at the time of injury to avoid misuse of opioids. This includes information on how to talk to providers about avoiding opioid misuse and alternative pain treatment.

**Tertiary Prevention in Employment** is the key area of reducing **workplace stigma and punitive workplace drug policies**. Testing and firing people, zero tolerance, or last chance agreements have the chilling effect of silencing workers who are struggling from coming forward for help. **Harm reduction** includes creating a work environment where people can ask for help when they are struggling with mental health and/or substance use issues without fear of reprisals. It also includes access to treatment and recovery resources and job accommodations as well as medication-assisted treatment. Training and education is key to informing workers, employers, other workplace leaders about the nature of opioid use disorder as a brain disease and not a morale failure.

**The Benefits for the Employer:** Workers in recovery have increased job stability, productivity, and longevity with the host company; improved workplace safety; and reduced disciplinary problems, workers' compensation and healthcare costs.

### **We Need You to**

#### **1. Join the P A R S E Coalition**

**2. Identify gaps and opportunities for workplace interventions,** training, and policy reform at the worksite, local, and state levels

**3. Help Plan Employment Opioids and the Workplace, Prevention and Recovery Symposium for 2023**

**4. Advocate for legislation to expand resources to support the establishment of a standard in NYS for a Recovery Supportive Workplace.** Such standards currently exist in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania among other states. The resources would provide staffing and funding to do outreach, training, certification, and other support for employers and labor organizations.

**5. Establish of a NYS Specific Workplace Toolkit for the Recovery Supportive Workplace and Training.** Other states have already created toolkits as well as the National Safety Council.

**6. Join our monthly coalition meeting** and/or recommend others to join! Please contact Chris Assini, Director of Policy for Friends of Recovery – New York at [cassini@for-ny.org](mailto:cassini@for-ny.org) or Jonathan Rosen, Safety & Health Consultant, National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety & Health Training at [jrosen396@gmail.com](mailto:jrosen396@gmail.com)