If you have issues viewing or accessing this file contact us at NCJRS.gov.

11407

National Institute on Drug Abuse

Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Problem of

Drug Abuse in the Workplace

Consensus Summary

ENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
g Abuse, and Mental Health Administration

119407

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this ~~copyrighted~~ material has been granted by

Public Domain/U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the ~~copyright~~ owner.

119407

THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

Drug abuse today is a cancer that threatens our society at every level. Insidious and addictive, costly and destructive, drug abuse is a public health threat that too easily escapes the confines of traditional public health systems. Illicit drugs infect the Nation in our homes, in our communities, and in our businesses and workforce.

To fight drug abuse, Americans must work together. In particular, business leaders need to take a firm stance against the use of illicit drugs. Such policies, together with programs of education, treatment and prevention, can provide the structure and leverage to ultimately reduce the demand for drugs. Business, communities and government, working arm in arm, must aim toward a drug-free workplace and a drug-free America.

This document represents a consensus on the difficult issues involved in establishing drug policy, strategies, and procedures. Representatives of business, labor, and industry have produced guidelines for achieving fair and equitable policies balancing the rights and responsibilities of both employers and employees. The use of drug testing is discussed extensively, and its utility and guidelines for use are clearly stated.

The health and safety of our workforce, and indeed the future of America, may well depend on the extent to which business, labor, and industry can develop an appropriate response to the epidemic use of drugs that plagues this Nation.

Otis R. Bowen, M.D.
Secretary

NCJRS
OCT 7 1989
ACQUISITIONS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document was edited by Dr. J. Michael Walsh, Office of Workplace Initiatives, and Dr. Steven W. Gust, Division of Clinical Research, National Institute on Drug Abuse. The Institute expresses sincere appreciation to O. Bruce Dickerson, Thomas J. Donegan, and Lee I. Dogoloff who served as panel chairmen and worked with the editors throughout all phases of this meeting. Without their leadership and enthusiasm this document would not have been possible.

COPYRIGHT STATUS

All material appearing in this volume is in the public domain and may be reproduced or copied without permission from the Institute or the authors. Citation of the source is appreciated.

DHHS Publication No. (ADM)87-1477
Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration
Printed 1986 Reprinted 1987

PREFACE

Drug abuse is a significant public health problem in our society. Concerns about drug abuse in the workplace have generated an increasing number of inquiries and requests for technical assistance from private industry. As part of an overall response to provide the best information possible, on March 6 and 7, 1986, the National Institute on Drug Abuse sponsored a national forum on "Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Problem of Drug Abuse in the Workplace." The purpose of this conference was to bring together representatives from business, industry, and labor to discuss the growing problem of drug abuse, its impact on American business, and ways of addressing the problem within the workplace environment.

The primary goal of the meeting was to develop a consensus on the need for addressing the problem of drug abuse in the workplace and to recommend procedures for establishing a fair and sound drug program which would address the needs, rights, and responsibilities of both the employee and the company. The increasing utilization of drug screening technology by employers has generated a number of legal, ethical, and technical issues, and these topics were discussed in detail.

The program was designed to allow speakers to address the issues pertinent to the process of establishing, implementing, and enforcing a drug policy or program. These issue areas included: legal, ethical, medical, technical, safety, security, labor, employee relations, employee assistance, and employee benefits. Formal presentations were made on the first day of the program. Consensus panels were convened during the evening for the purpose of drafting answers to several specific questions relating to drug abuse issues from the unique perspective of each group. There were three consensus panels: (1) Health and Safety, (2) Legal and Ethical, and (3) Human Relations; each

included 10 to 12 members. The membership in each of the three panels consisted of representatives from the group of speakers and members invited from the conference participants. Attempts were made to staff each panel with representatives providing a depth of expertise and sufficient representation from outside the specific topic area to provide appropriate balance.

Prior to the conference, the chairman of each of the three panels identified issues relevant to drug policy development and implementation from the perspective of the panel area. These issues formed the basis of questions for panel deliberation. The task of the panels, therefore, was to deliberate and formulate suggested guidelines for business, industry, and labor, with attention to these issues, to achieve effective and fair policy.

On the second day of the conference, the panel chairmen drafted an overall consensus statement addressing the general areas of interest and reflecting the agreement of the separate panels on general issues. The drafts of the consensus statements from each panel and the chairmen's overall statement were presented for discussion in open plenary session. All participants had the opportunity to comment and suggest revisions at this time. The input from this discussion period was incorporated into the final statements presented herein.

In summary, the procedure for development of this consensus was: (1) Experts addressed specific issues relevant to drug program development and implementation; (2) Consensus panels were formed to draft responses to questions pertaining to these issues based on their experience and information presented by the speakers; (3) An overall consensus statement was drafted; (4) Report of the consensus statements was made in a plenary session, followed by response and input from the conference participants; (5) The consensus statements were revised based on this input and ultimately finalized into the following document.

CONTENTS

GENERAL CONSENSUS STATEMENT ON DRUG ABUSE* IN THE WORKPLACE

I. Drug abuse is a significant public health problem; it is pervasive in our society.

- The National Household Survey, conducted for the National Institute on Drug Abuse, indicates that 19 percent of Americans over 12 years of age have used illicit drugs during the last year.

- In the 18 to 25 year old adult population, representing those entering the work force, 65 percent have used illicit drugs, 44 percent in the last year.

- The Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration estimates that alcohol and drug abuse cost nearly $100 billion in lost productivity each year.

- The human cost to society and the social, economic, and legal costs to business have created a new awareness of the multifaceted problems resulting from alcohol and drug abuse, and there is consensus among government and business that action must be taken to lessen these costs.

---

*As used in these statements, drug abuse includes the use of illicit substances or misuse of controlled substances, alcohol, or other psychoactive drugs.

II. Drug abuse in the workplace is a problem which must be addressed forthrightly and decisively in a fair and equitable manner with due consideration of the rights of the employer, employee, and the general public.

- The elements of a drug abuse policy should be based on the rationale that use of drugs, including alcohol, by employees in the workplace is unacceptable since it can adversely affect health and safety, security, and productivity, as well as public confidence and trust.

- The process for developing such a policy should include input from all aspects of an organization, including: labor relations, union, legal, medical, security, and employee assistance staff.

- The resulting policy should clearly state the employer's rationale and expectations regarding drug use--and the action to be anticipated in response to drug use. Employees should be explicitly informed of company policy and made aware of the consequences of drug use. Once a policy is established it should be strictly adhered to and closely monitored to ensure that it is administered fairly and consistently.

- Supervisors and coworkers can be vital in the early identification of problems, in encouraging fellow employees to self-refer for treatment, and in forming social support networks during and after treatment.

III. Drug abuse policy should be developed according to the best available current knowledge about abuse and its consequences.

- Expert advice should be obtained when developing the technical aspects of the policy, program, and procedures.

- Employers should become involved in the early identification, treatment, and followup of employees with drug abuse problems.

- Urine screening can be an effective tool in the early identification of employees with drug problems and should be considered as a useful technique within the overall program. Extreme caution must be exercised to assure that the collection, handling, and testing procedures are reliable and accurate.

- Self-referrals as well as company referrals to treatment should be accorded maximum respect for individual confidentiality consistent with safety and security issues.

- Followup procedures should be developed which ensure effective treatment and rehabilitation. However, alternative actions, including dismissal, may be appropriate for those who are unwilling or unable to return successfully to the workplace.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES CONSENSUS STATEMENT*

All companies or agencies should ascertain whether the abuse of drugs is an issue for them. If it is, they should consider how a constructive outcome could best be achieved for all concerned and whether the appropriate response should include drug screening. Each company or agency needs to identify and examine its own assumptions in these regards and decide what action is required, what is responsible, and what is realistic.

1. Is drug screening a reasonable component of programs designed to reduce drug abuse in the workplace?

The decision to establish a screening program for drug abuse should be based upon conclusions after considering: (1) the awareness of or concern about impaired performance at the worksite; (2) the impact of drug abuse upon the health, safety, security, and productivity of employees; and (3) supportive or alternative means to detect drug use in the workplace.

If the decision is to introduce drug screening, consideration of the usefulness of drug screening in

---

*This panel included representatives from the corporate medical offices of several large corporations operating in the computer, oil, manufacturing, personal products, automobile, publishing, and airline businesses. Additional members represented a medical laboratory, a business consulting firm, a corporate security office, the administrative office of a large medical center, and the Federal government.

assessing employees' health and/or fitness for duty is important.

A substantial amount of literature--compiled by law enforcement and drug rehabilitation agencies--exists today describing the debilitating effects of drugs. The evidence clearly indicates that a negative relationship exists between being under the influence of alcohol and/or certain drugs and the ability to perform a job with regard to judgment, interpersonal relationships, manual dexterity, and the utilization of skills. The evaluation of employees to determine fitness for duty has long been performed in industry. Within the context of occupational medicine programs, medical examinations were initially performed to ensure the selection of personnel free of medical conditions which would be likely to interfere with their ability to work safely and efficiently. In recent years, within the context of health promotion and wellness programs, an additional purpose of the medical evaluation has evolved; that is, to address risk factors that may impair employee health, e.g., poor nutrition, drug abuse, hypertension. As the incidence and prevalence of drug abuse in the United States has risen, many companies have developed preemployment and inservice drug screening programs to ensure the safe and productive conduct of their businesses. These programs permit early identification and referral for treatment of those employees with drug abuse problems. The integration of drug screening with programs for employee assistance, rehabilitation, treatment, education, and the application of appropriate management action are components of a comprehensive program to confront drug abuse in the workplace.

Although urine screening technology is effective in determining prior drug use, positive results of a urine screen do not prove intoxication or impaired performance. Drugs or their metabolites may appear in urine for several days, even weeks (depending upon the drug), without apparent impairment. Screening may be used to support evaluations of impairment, identified as performance deficiencies or histories of safety or

behavioral problems. Because the evaluation involves interpreting biological tests and differentiating drug use impairment from other types of impairment, the drug screening program should be under direct medical supervision, or with technical interpretive input from the responsible medical resource.

2. What questions or issues should be addressed when developing a preemployment screening program?

Drug screening includes detection of chemical substances that may compromise the safety, security, and performance of employees. Companies should inform job applicants that drug screening is a required part of the preemployment examination. In most companies, a confirmed drug presence in urine would have a serious negative impact on an applicant's chances for employment. The drug screening is only one component in the overall applicant evaluation process, but if the applicant cannot provide an acceptable explanation for a positive finding, that applicant usually would not be offered employment. Individual company policy determines the disposition of the application. These policies may allow reapplication based on functional requirements of the position. Companies should inform applicants when the reason they are not hired is a confirmed drug presence in urine. When applicants are informed of a positive drug screen, the company should provide some level of counseling or information to the applicant regarding risks involved in drug abuse.

3. What questions or issues should be addressed when drug screens are proposed for inservice employees?

When a drug policy is established, the rationale should be stated for the target employee population. The rationale should link testing to performance, safety, and security criteria. When an employee's drug screen is positive, rehabilitative help should be offered. However, safety and security considerations for the employee and his or her fellow workers are a

first priority and must take precedence over other considerations. Managers should attend awareness programs to help them identify employees with performance or conduct problems and should refer them to appropriate resources.

If an employee whose job involves safety and security concerns refuses rehabilitation, management must be informed and appropriate administrative action taken. This may include probation, suspension, or dismissal. If the employee volunteers a problem without performance, safety, or security considerations, management should not be notified because of medical confidentiality. Even when performance, safety, or security issues are involved, communication to management concerning suggested restrictions or administrative procedures should maintain privacy to the extent possible.

Companies have varying views and practices for handling multiple offenses. The type of drug abuse is pertinent to their evaluations and actions. In all probability, few companies would allow a heroin user a second offense without strong administrative action, whereas an alcohol or marijuana user might be allowed another rehabilitation opportunity, depending on the time between offenses and the nature of the job. Data are lacking concerning the most effective treatment modality, but several weeks of intensive residential treatment for a significant drug problem may provide the best chance for recovery. In selected cases, intensive nonresidential treatment may be effective.

In addition to the Employee Assistance Program, drug awareness and education programs should be offered to employees and members of their families.

4. What are the potential risks of drug screening to the employer and the employee?

Because there are very real risks and consequences for employers and employees of both false positive and false negative test results, it is critical that labo-

ratory and test procedures meet certain standards. Within the company, a drug screening program must assure proper handling of both specimens and their results. The integrity of the drug test begins with the specimen collection and transport as described by a well-documented chain of custody, and continues through the choice of laboratory and assay tests.

For those situations where the ultimate sanction is termination or denial of employment or the benefits of employment, it should be mandatory that samples be analyzed by those methods and by those laboratories which will assure an accurate chemical result. Positive urinalysis results should always be confirmed by an alternate methodology to that used for the initial screen. Because confirmation by gas chromatography combined with mass spectrometry (GC/MS) provides the best level of confidence, this method is rapidly becoming the confirmation method of choice and is mandated by the Department of Defense for confirmation of all positives. It is, therefore, recommended here as the confirmation method of choice even though other methods may be acceptable in some cases.

Because of the rapidly increasing demand for urinalysis and recent concerns about quality assurance deficiencies in some laboratories, certification and proficiency testing of urinalysis laboratories should be mandated. Certification programs are currently being developed but are not yet readily available. As part of laboratory certification, the individuals in the laboratory who perform the assays and, in particular, the individuals who interpret the results and advise the client as to the appropriate procedures should have the proper training, credentials, and experience in such work. Until certification and proficiency testing programs are available, the employer should take responsibility to assure that the laboratory's performance is optimal by demanding the use of internal and external quality control procedures, and by instituting external quality controls themselves through the use of blank samples, split samples, and spiked samples.

The pervasiveness of drug abuse in society and, in particular, at the worksite raises issues of privacy and confidentiality. Although employers have expressed the opinion that expectations of privacy and confidentiality must be balanced against other principles such as safety, security, and efficient performance, every effort should be made to maintain the confidentiality of employees' drug records, including test results. The Code of Ethical Conduct for Physicians Providing Occupational Medical Services adopted by the American Occupational Medicine Association and the American Academy of Occupational Medicine recognizes that employers are entitled to counsel about the medical fitness of individuals in relation to their work, but are not entitled to diagnoses or details of a specific nature.

LEGAL AND SECURITY CONCERNS CONSENSUS STATEMENT*

1. Are there ethical issues that should preclude action by an employer to restrict or prevent drug abuse among employees?

Testing for drug abuse in the workplace raises serious concerns regarding employer intrusion into the privacy of employees' activities in their off-duty hours. Such testing programs should be conducted in a fair and equitable manner with the highest regard for protecting the privacy of employees.

However, other concerns must be weighed in addition to an employee's right to privacy. These include the employer's obligation to provide a safe environment for the employee and the public, to provide a safe and high quality product or service for the customer, and to protect shareholders from unnecessary financial loss due to drug abuse among employees.

Drug abuse has reached such serious levels in the United States that every public and private employer must give careful consideration to whether action is necessary at his/her place of employment to attempt to reduce or eliminate drug abuse among its employees. A balancing of the ethical concerns created by drug use in the workplace will, in many cases, result in a

---

*This panel included attorneys representing the legal departments of major aerospace and high-technology manufacturing companies, several commercial medical laboratories, a major law firm, and two Federal agencies. Additional members were from the Employee Assistance Programs from two large corporations, a corporate security director, and attorneys from civil liberties and legal protection groups.

need for employer action to screen prospective and current employees for the presence of drugs of abuse.

2. Under what circumstances and by what means is it appropriate to test employees and applicants for employment for drug abuse?

Screening of applicants for employment for drug abuse by any private or public employer is appropriate, and a negative test may appropriately be considered a condition of employment. An employer should consider directing employees or applicants with positive tests to seek help.

Such programs should be conducted pursuant to standards of fairness. It is in the best interests of labor organizations and employers to cooperate in providing reasonable programs to test employees for drug abuse.

Drug testing programs should be fully disclosed to employees in advance. The employees' rights and the availability of treatment programs should be fully explained in advance to all employees subject to such testing.

Testing of employees for drug abuse must be conducted only through methods with proven reliability and should be conducted in strict compliance with the appropriate procedures for those tests. The courts have upheld the use of urine testing as a reliable method of screening for drug use. However, positive tests should always be confirmed by a second test using an alternative methodology before any action is taken which may adversely affect employment.

A requirement that current employees submit to urine testing for drug use is appropriate and legally defensible if there is reasonable suspicion based on specific facts and rational inferences drawn from those facts to conclude that employees are currently engaged in drug abuse.

Testing may also be appropriate as a part of a routine, periodic physical examination, including a return-to-service examination. Additional testing requirements may be warranted for employees who perform tasks that directly affect the safety of the public or other employees and for employees in sensitive security positions. Testing may legitimately be required after on-the-job incidents that may indicate impaired performance, such as accidents. Qualifying incidents should be clearly defined in advance, so that supervisory discretion is appropriately limited. Such incidents should be limited to those truly significant in the particular workplace.

Random screening for drug abuse under a well-defined program employing neutral criteria is also appropriate and legally defensible in certain circumstances, but should be limited to situations where it is essential that an employee be entirely free of any effects of drug use. Such circumstances shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, employees who directly affect the safety of the public and/or other employees.

Any drug abuse policy should carefully delineate what is required of the employee, and the testing methodology selected should be well adapted to enforcement of the policy. For instance, in a workplace where safety or security concerns are at issue, the employer may have a policy forbidding use of certain drugs on or off the job. In that case, a confirmed-positive urine sample may provide a proper basis for discipline (assuming observance of established procedures for hearing and dispute resolution). Similarly, where the inquiry relates to whether a drug abuse problem is contributing to a long-term decline in performance (e.g., absenteeism, reduced productivity), one or more positive urine samples may assist a clinician in determining that an employee has a chronic drug abuse problem that requires treatment. However, if the subject of an inquiry is whether or not a serious job-related incident, such as an accident, occurred because an employee was impaired by the acute effects of a drug while on the job, then the employee should

be given the opportunity to provide a blood sample at the time a urine sample is collected.

3. What can be done if an employee or prospective employee tests positive for drug abuse?

If a prospective employee receives test results indicating the use of illicit drugs, an employer may deny employment to that individual on that basis. However, that employer is encouraged to aid the prospective employee in entering a drug treatment program, if appropriate, and to reconsider him or her for employment if such a program is successfully completed or if subsequent tests demonstrate that the employee is no longer engaged in drug abuse.

If a current employee receives test results indicating drug abuse, action taken regarding that person's employment should depend on the nature of the employee's work. Although it is appropriate and legally defensible to suspend or terminate immediately any employee who has responsibilities directly affecting the safety or security of the public or other employees, employers should consider providing an opportunity for that employee, and other employees who test positive for drug abuse, to enter a drug treatment program and to be eligible for reinstatement in an appropriate position upon successful completion of that program. It may also be appropriate in certain situations of casual or infrequent abuse to allow an employee to demonstrate by one or more future negative tests that the drug abuse has been stopped. An employer is justified in terminating the employment of any employee whose test yields results indicating drug abuse after appropriate opportunities for treatment or cessation of such abuse have been provided.

4. What degree of confidential treatment must be given to positive test results?

All information obtained in the course of examinations, rehabilitation, and treatment of employees with

drug abuse problems shall be protected as confidential medical information. No data concerning this information or participation in any rehabilitative program should be made part of the employee's personnel file or should be provided to any other party without the direct written consent of the employee except as required by law or by established company policy in connection with the adjudication of that employee's rights.

The purpose of testing for drug use at a place of employment should be primarily to protect the safety and integrity of the workplace. Therefore, an employer should not routinely make the results of positive tests for drugs available to law enforcement authorities. Although employers should cooperate with investigations of drug trafficking insofar as their employees and/or their workplace are involved, the results of drug screening tests of individual employees conducted for employment purposes should not be provided to law enforcement authorities except as required by law.

5. What is the potential liability of an employer for testing or failure to test employees for drug abuse?

Given the existence of reliable technology for determining if an employee is engaged in drug use, an employer who fails to test prospective employees and current employees as appropriate may face increased liability if a drug abuser injures another employee or a member of the public. Potential liability of an employer who requires appropriate drug screening for employees can occur in circumstances such as the following:

a. Negligence in the manner in which the specimens are collected, the tests are conducted, or the specimens preserved;

b. Improper disclosure of the fact that an individual employee has received positive test results;

c. Failure to comply with collective bargaining agreements or other contractual obligations to employees in taking adverse action regarding an individual's employment based on evidence of drug abuse;

d. Failure to take appropriate action to remove a drug abuser from a position directly affecting public or employee safety after receiving positive test results.

6. Legal requirements aside, what are the ethical obligations of an employer to employees who test positive for drug abuse?

The primary emphasis of workplace testing programs to screen employees for drug abuse should be rehabilitative rather than punitive for employees who receive positive test results. To the extent that it is consistent with the safe operation of his/her business and maintenance of public confidence in the product or service, the employer should provide an opportunity for employees either to enter a drug education and rehabilitation program and to be considered for reinstatement after successful completion of such a program or to demonstrate that the pattern of drug abuse has stopped. Eligibility for reinstatement should depend on the frequency and seriousness of an employee's involvement with drugs.

HUMAN RELATIONS ISSUES CONSENSUS STATEMENT*

There is ample evidence available that drug abuse is a significant problem for the work setting and that any solution to the problem demands a multidimensional approach which includes identification, education, prevention, and treatment.

The goal of an employer's policy should be to maintain a work force free from impairment by drug effects detrimental to productivity, safety, and health, and at the same time to offer any employee who does not meet those conditions an opportunity, consistent with other employer policies, to be restored to an optimal level of performance.

In any company the Human Resources Group should play a leadership role in the formulation of a drug abuse policy. Representatives from medical, employee assistance, security, and labor relations groups should be active participants together with a broad-based representation from line management. Labor union participation and support are highly desirable and will facilitate and enhance the ultimate success of such a policy. Union representatives should be encouraged to participate in the same manner as they do in the development of other human resource policies.

---

*Members of this panel demonstrated broad experience in the human resources area and included representatives from the human relations departments of public utility, pharmaceutical, electronics, mining, and mass transit companies, an EAP consulting firm, an arbitrator, the Chamber of Commerce, national labor unions, and the Federal government.

Communication of the policy is primarily the responsibility of the Human Resources Group with the active involvement of line management and union representatives. Training staff may also be called upon to assist in carrying out these responsibilities. The implementation of the policy is a line management responsibility to be carried out with the full support, advice, and counsel of the Human Resources Group, including medical, employee assistance, labor relations, etc. In addition, Human Resources should monitor the application of the policy to ensure fairness and consistency.

Given what is known about the progressive nature of chemical dependency, employers are encouraged to include provisions for early identification which is desirable for optimal intervention. Specifically, employers are encouraged to develop employee assistance plans (EAPs) to reach drug-abusing employees.

Laboratory tests of breath, urine, and/or blood, are useful tools to establish that drug use has occurred at some time. Extreme caution must be exercised to assure that the collection, handling, and testing procedures are reliable and accurate. Prior to instituting testing procedures, the employer should establish a clear relationship between drug abuse and job performance, as well as what actions, such as referral to treatment, will follow positive results. A single positive test result, even if confirmed, should not form the sole basis for disciplinary action; consideration of factors such as work history, public safety, and security issues would also bear on the determination of any remedial action. The criteria for pre-employment, for-cause, random, and scheduled testing are entirely separate. Random testing may be used only in the most extreme circumstances. The panel, however, was unable to reach a consensus on a definition of these circumstances. The representatives from major labor organizations abstained from this paragraph on laboratory testing.

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Research data provides an empirical base for the development of effective drug abuse programming. Such information was identified as being of primary importance in several areas. Objective data on the effects of drugs on the psychomotor, cognitive, and sensory skills affecting performance should be gathered. Research should focus on all abused drugs, but a special priority should be given to studies of marijuana, cocaine, and benzodiazepines. Information is needed on the prevalence of drug use in the workplace as well as on the patterns of use, mixed drug use, and the progression of drug use. There is a need for developing noninvasive techniques to establish drug-impaired performance. Studies should be conducted on the chronic, long-term effects of drug use on the health of the user and on others (fetus, family members, coworkers), as well as the more global societal effects (cost to industry). Techniques should be established for evaluating the cost/benefit of various drug abuse policy options. Additional research should be done to continue improving drug detection technology, including the use of noninvasive behavioral criteria. New prevention and treatment strategies should be developed incorporating the use of drug detection technology. Qualitative and quantitative evaluation methodologies to enable employee assistance programs to identify substance abusing employees are needed.

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Drug screening is a controversial procedure which involves balancing the rights of the individual with those of the employer and the public. The judicial and legislative systems will forge guidelines for the just and effective use of such techniques. Specific areas of more immediate concern are the need for establishing informed consent procedures, guidelines for limiting the dissemination of test results, laboratory regulations and certification standards, and the inclusion of drug abuse education in medical and other professional training. Federal and state laws should encourage private and public employers to establish cost-effective/beneficial drug abuse programs and should promote investment in new techniques to improve these programs.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402