



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

The NYS PARSE Coalition can help you get started in establishing a RRW program.

Attention NYS Employers

Are you ready to establish a recovery ready workplace (RRW) program?

Background

The workplace is often the forgotten link in the national and state response to the opioid crisis. Seventy percent of the 9.3 million people who misused prescription opioids in 2020 were employed full or part time according to SAMHSA.

Ignoring substance use in the workplace is very costly to workers, families, and employers. The overdose crisis has harmed the NYS economy and is a major factor in the labor shortage. Between 2009 to 2015, an estimated **225,000** NY workers were lost from the labor market due to opioids. New York's economy cumulatively lost **\$179.4 billion** in real economic output. Retaining and hiring people in recovery is good for business, good for labor, and good for our families. The time is now!

New York State experienced 5,017 opioid overdose deaths in 2021. Each of these deaths have a devastating impact on families, employers, and co-workers. More than 16% of New Yorkers surveyed reported excessive drinking of alcohol. More than 8,050 New Yorkers die each year from alcohol use.

Employment is Key to Health

Jobs give people a purpose, a routine, and provide funding for housing, food, child support, and access to medical care.

Recovery Ready 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. RRW'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.

- **Primary Prevention** includes work to prevent initiation of new cases of substance misuse by promoting healthy and safe work environments for all workers. Work related injuries often result in prescription of opioids and

MISSION STATEMENT

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

lead to addiction. Workplace stress is also associated with self-medication. Reducing job hazards and stressors that may lead to substance misuse is primary prevention.

- **Secondary Prevention** includes providing 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. See the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Factsheet: https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/public/hasl_get_blob.cfm?ID=11583
- **Tertiary Prevention** 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 and employers about the nature of substance use disorder as a brain disease and not a morale failure. There are currently 22.3 million people in recovery in the U.S. **Employers can be an important pipeline to recovery and benefit by retaining valuable workers.**

Benefits for the Employer

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



What can be done?

1. **Initiate a recovery ready workplace program at your worksite.** PARSE can help provide or identify resources for developing a site-specific process for establishing a RRW program including site assessment, developing an onsite work group or task force, training, communications, and policy reform. It all starts with dialogue!
2. **Learn more about RRWs.** Information on the steps for becoming a Recovery Ready Workplace and related resources are available here. <https://for-ny.org/parse/>
3. **Join the PARSE Coalition**
Email: Annette Bernhardt, Annette@ginomacchiofoundation.com

For more information or assistance, please contact Chris Assini, Director of Policy for Friends of Recovery – New York at cassini@for-ny.org or Jonathan Rosen, Safety & Health Consultant, National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety & Health Training at jrosen396@gmail.com