

Let's change the conversation around employment and substance use disorders.

As a forerunner in the centers of excellence category, Contigo Health® now brings to market our new substance use disorder program, which surrounds and supports individuals seeking treatment.

For reasons almost too numerous to count, including the most recent pandemic, substance use disorders, or SUDs, have been on a steady rise in the workplace and beyond. Whether it be the lasting effects of the pandemic or the changing family and socioeconomic dynamics facing our communities, we must look at this not as an individual problem but rather as a problem gripping us all.

The numbers back this up: 70.4% of all adults with an alcohol or illicit drug use disorder are employed,¹ and 1 in 7 Americans will experience a substance use disorder.² And it's staggering to think that 10% to 15% of those in healthcare will misuse substances during their lifetime.³

According to one national survey in 2021, Americans' substance use has increased 30% overall since the start of the pandemic.⁴ These numbers should startle us and make us realize that reframing the conversation around substance use disorder isn't something we need to do but rather something we have to do.

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contigohealth 

/// Centers of Excellence 360

Substance Use Disorder Program

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Let's understand how SUDs are affecting the workplace.

According to the National Safety Council, the impact of substance use disorders on the workplace is considerable. Some studies place the base cost for employers to recruit and train replacement workers at a third of a worker's annual salary, with additional costs to the employer totaling roughly half that salary when all is said and done. In some sectors with higher average salaries, this cost can be even greater.⁵

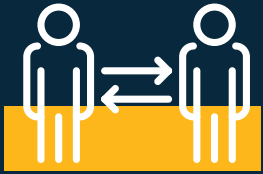
The costs for employers who have employees with untreated SUDs is also eye-opening. The annual attributable medical expenditure of a SUD diagnosis for employer-sponsored insurance was found to be \$15,640 per affected enrollee and a staggering \$35.3 billion in the population. Alcohol-related disorders (\$10.2 billion) and opioid-related disorders (\$7.3 billion) were the most costly.⁶

In addition, almost 9% of working adults have a substance use disorder, with alcohol use and cannabis use disorders being the most common. Rates of SUDs are higher in industries like construction, trucking, and mining. Industries with easy access to alcohol, like entertainment and food service, also have higher SUD rates.⁵

Changing the stigma surrounding SUDs needs to be a goal.

For far too long, society—and especially the workplace—has seen those suffering from substance use disorders as having a moral failing. The perception that this disorder is a choice needs to change. We need to look at substance use disorders not as a personal failure but as a serious health problem on par with other unmanaged chronic conditions like diabetes and COPD.

This reality—long understood by SUD treatment professionals but still new to many—has to be driven home by employers. If a drug-free workplace and healthier employees are the goals, success rests firmly in the lap of employers, who must be advocates for their employees, a significant number of whom may be suffering in silence due to fear of losing their jobs. After all, an effective policy isn't something that just happens—it's driven by a positive workplace culture that begins and ends with employers making employees comfortable and aware of their particular policy and its positive effects.



THE BOTTOM LINE

is that employers need a way to offer access to confidential treatment that gives employees the privacy to seek the care they need without fear of losing their jobs or wages.



CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

around SUDs in the workplace is something we take very seriously at Contigo Health, and it's why we are pioneering and building a treatment program that's everything traditional programs have failed to be.

Together, we can all create a more accepting workplace environment.

We can all encourage each other while in the workplace to be strong advocates for our fellow employees who may need support. Seeing those who are struggling as people first—people with a treatable illness—is a step toward helping them on their road to recovery. Regardless, the emphasis should never be on judging a person or looking down on them from a moral high ground but rather on helping them seek the treatment best suited for their success.

The bottom line is that employers need a way to offer access to confidential treatment that gives employees the privacy to seek the care they need without fear of losing their jobs or wages.

At Contigo Health®, we're helping to change the conversation around SUDs by offering a revolutionary new approach to treating them.

Changing the conversation around SUDs in the workplace is something we take very seriously at Contigo Health, and it's why we are pioneering and building a treatment program that's everything traditional programs have failed to be. For one, it's discreet, allowing employees to work without having to share personal struggles with their employer in industries that don't have mandatory drug screening, possibly motivating individuals who may not have reached out for help before.

It's practical, allowing a person to seek care while continuing to work and live at home. And above all, it's accepting. Our program welcomes all with open arms and gives special consideration to members of the LGBTQIA+ community and diverse populations.

So how does it work?

Immediate support is provided 24/7 from our trusted partner, Lionrock Behavioral Health, Inc., who pioneered virtual outpatient SUD treatment and continues to lead the way in virtual, in-home care. A health plan member will be referred to a licensed counselor to determine the right level of treatment.

What makes our SUD program so unique, aside from the promise of incredible support within an hour, is that our health plan members can access our revolutionary hybrid treatment plan and get residential inpatient care, outpatient care, or virtual outpatient care, depending on their individual needs. Now a person can participate in treatment virtually from home, which removes one of the biggest barriers to treatment: access. Virtual one-on-one meetings and group sessions can all be handled outside of work so the person doesn't have to leave their family or job, causing less disruption in their lives.

Those with more complex needs—e.g., co-occurring mental health concerns, medication management, and/or a higher-severity SUD—can also access treatment through our world-class and renowned collaborator, the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation.





The impact of substance use disorders is far-reaching.

No one is untouched. But together, we can help change the conversation surrounding them and combat the stigmas and preconceived notions that traditional workplaces and treatment plans have often held.

Regardless of the determined pathway, what this program does differently is wrap its arms around the individual, providing not just high-quality care for a predetermined period of time but surrounding them with a team. This team will help continue treatment for however long is necessary to achieve success and maintain recovery. In other words, a person receiving treatment isn't left to go it alone once they exit the program. This new approach to SUDs is something that hasn't traditionally been offered by many carriers, which has often left employers with a hole in their healthcare plan and employees with untreated SUDs left wondering.

This new way of treating members is a part of our transformation of Contigo Health Centers of Excellence 360™. We're creating a first-of-its-kind, guided comprehensive care journey. This program is the next phase in making patient care even better.

The impact of substance use disorders is far-reaching. No one is untouched. But together, we can help change the conversation surrounding SUDs and combat the stigmas and preconceived notions that traditional workplaces and treatment plans have often held. Because it's time—time we wrap our arms around those who are suffering and give them the dignity and respect that a

For more information, contact **Britt Hayes**, Contigo Health's Chief Commercial Officer, at Britt.Hayes@contigohealth.com, or call 330-656-1072.





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