



How the Prescription Drug Crisis is Impacting American Employers

Deborah A.P. Hersman
President & CEO
National Safety Council



Who is NSC?

The National Safety Council saves lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the roads through leadership, research, education and advocacy.

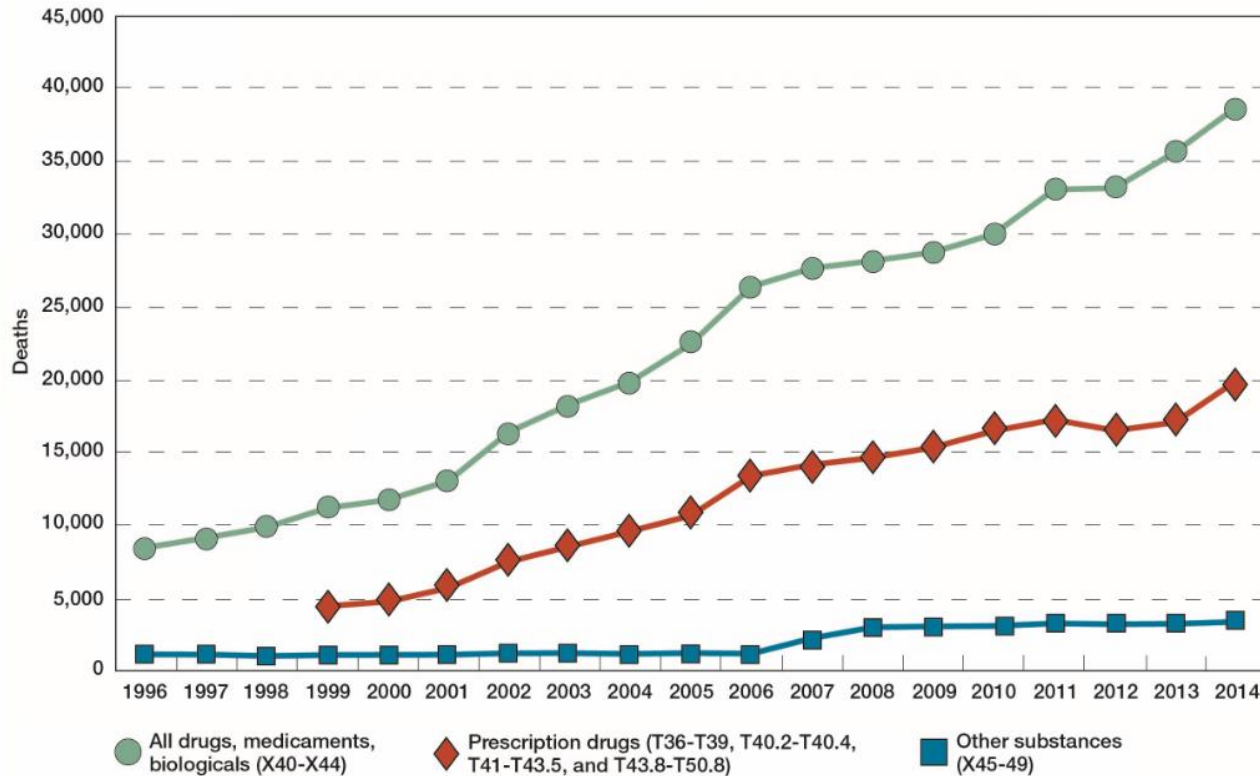


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The Issue

Unintentional poisoning deaths, United States, 1996-2014



Note: Classification system changed in 1999 (see the Technical Appendix).

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Why Employers Should Care



Bottom Line:

Employer supported and monitored treatment yields better sustained recovery rates than treatment initiated at the request of friends and family members.*

* (2009) Substance use, symptoms, and employment outcomes of persons with a workplace mandate for chemical dependency treatment. *Psychiatric Services*, 60(5), 646-654.



Survey Background and Methodology

- NSC commissioned B2B International to research **U.S. employers' perceptions of and experiences with prescription drugs, and processes and policies for dealing with it.**
- **501 interviews with HR decision makers** across a geographically representative sample of US employers with 50 or more employees.
- **4.4% margin of error at the industry standard 95% confidence level.**
- Based on a **geographically representative sample** of US businesses, with a mix of industries and company sizes.
- All represent organizations with **50 or more employees**, and all are based in the US. While 23% of the businesses are global, all responses are focused on US operations.

Full methodology can be provided



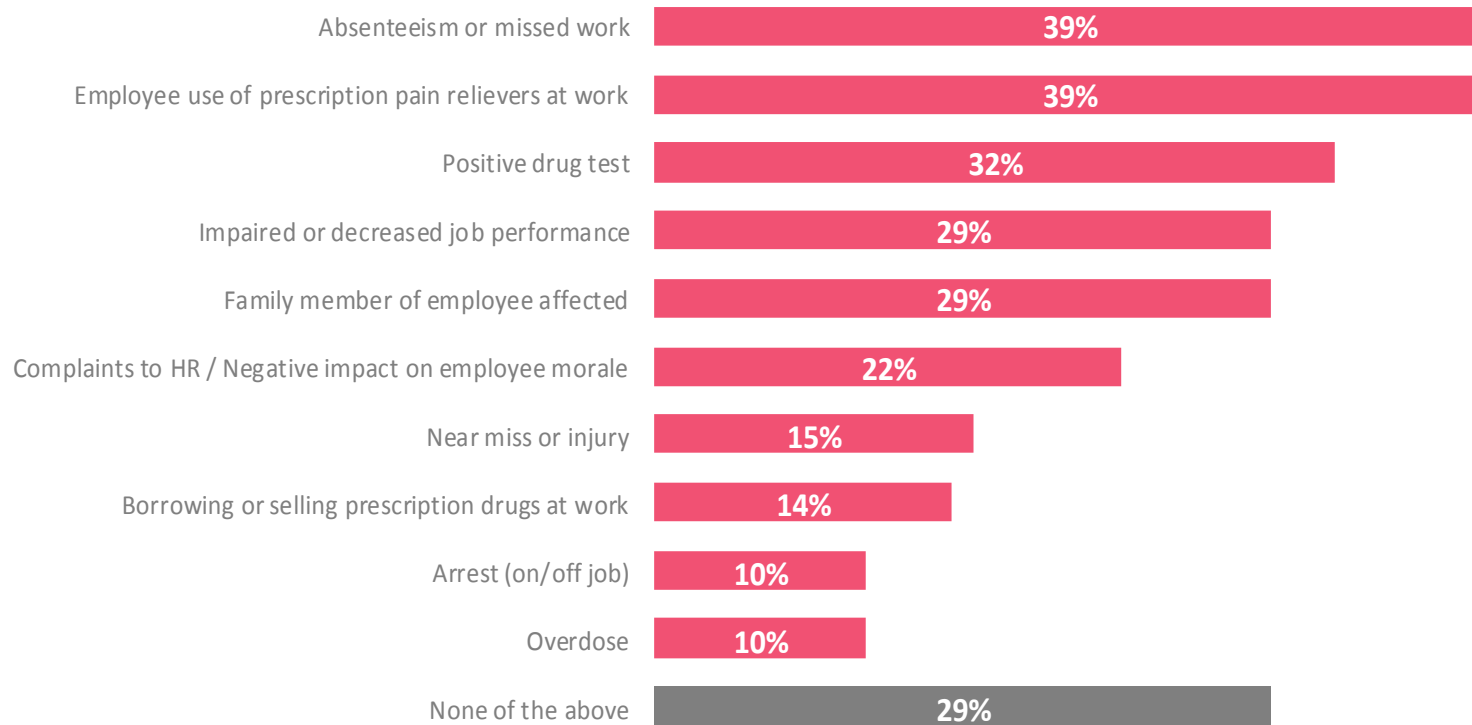
Key Takeaways

- ❖ More than 70% of employers have been impacted by prescription drugs.
- ❖ 19% feel extremely prepared to deal with prescription drug misuse.
- ❖ 76% are not offering training on how to identify signs of misuse.
- ❖ 81% lack a comprehensive drug-free workplace policy.
- ❖ 41% of those who drug test all employees are not testing for synthetic opioids.
- ❖ Encouragingly, 70% would like to help employees return to work following appropriate treatment.



7 in 10 Employers Have Felt Some Effect Of Prescription Drug Usage

Incidents Experienced Due To Prescription Drug Usage ...



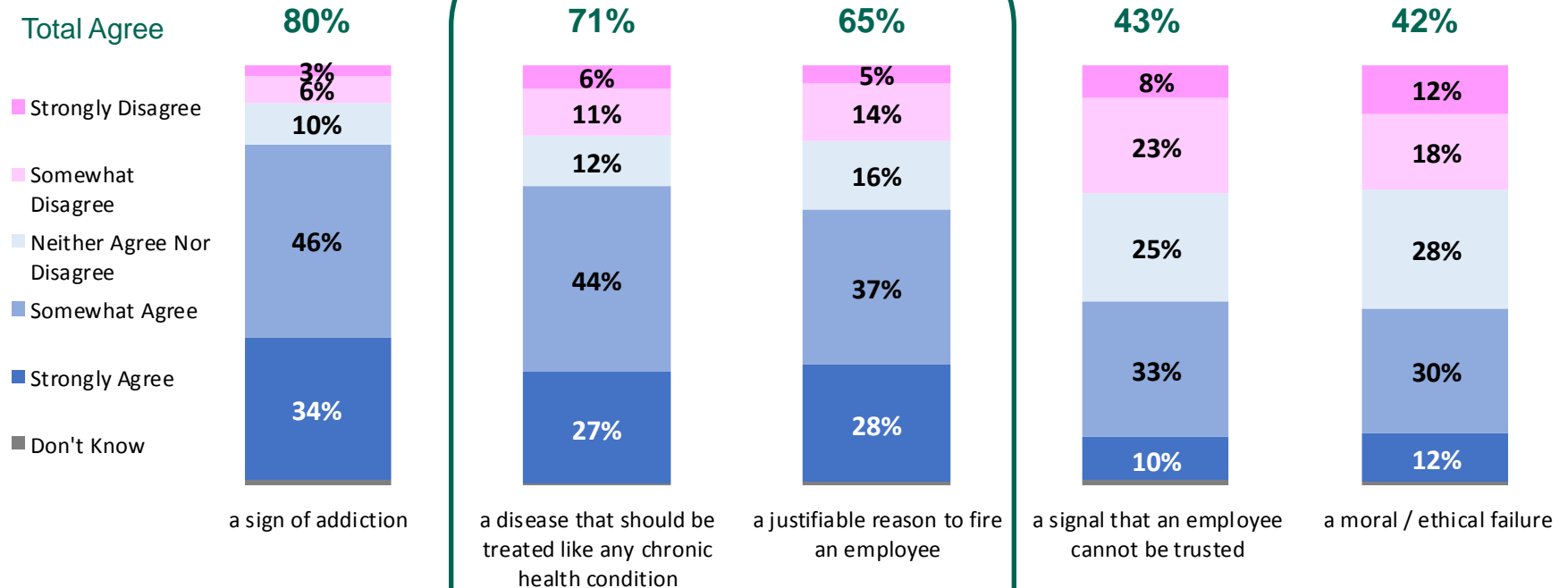
Base: 501
(All Respondents)

Q7. Keeping in mind that all information will be kept strictly confidential, which of the following are you aware of having occurred in your workforce?



71% Say Prescription Drug Misuse is a Disease That Requires Treatment, but 65% Feel it is a Justifiable Reason to Fire an Employee.

Misuse and abuse of prescription drugs is...

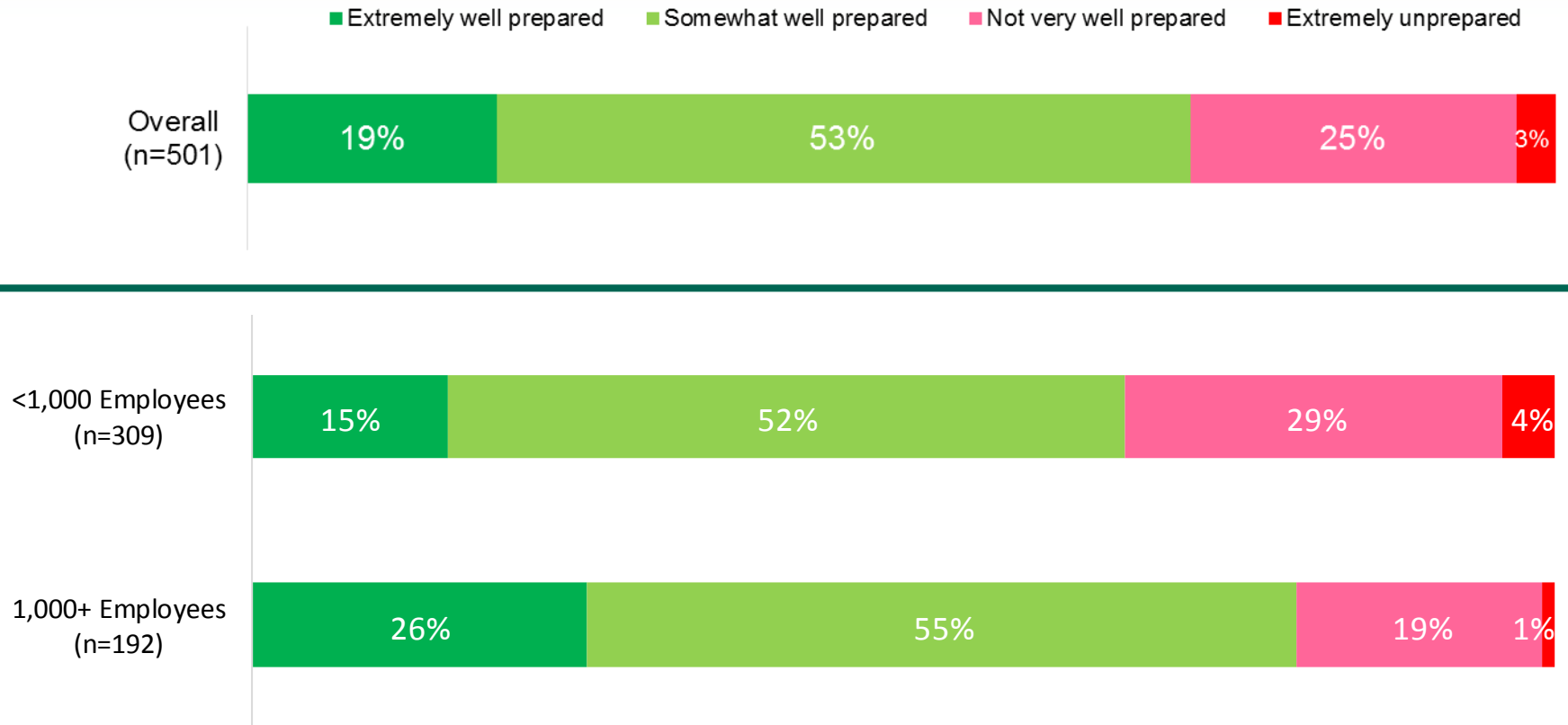


Base: 501
(All Respondents)

Q6. Please rate your agreement with each of the following statements about the impact of prescription drugs on your organization...



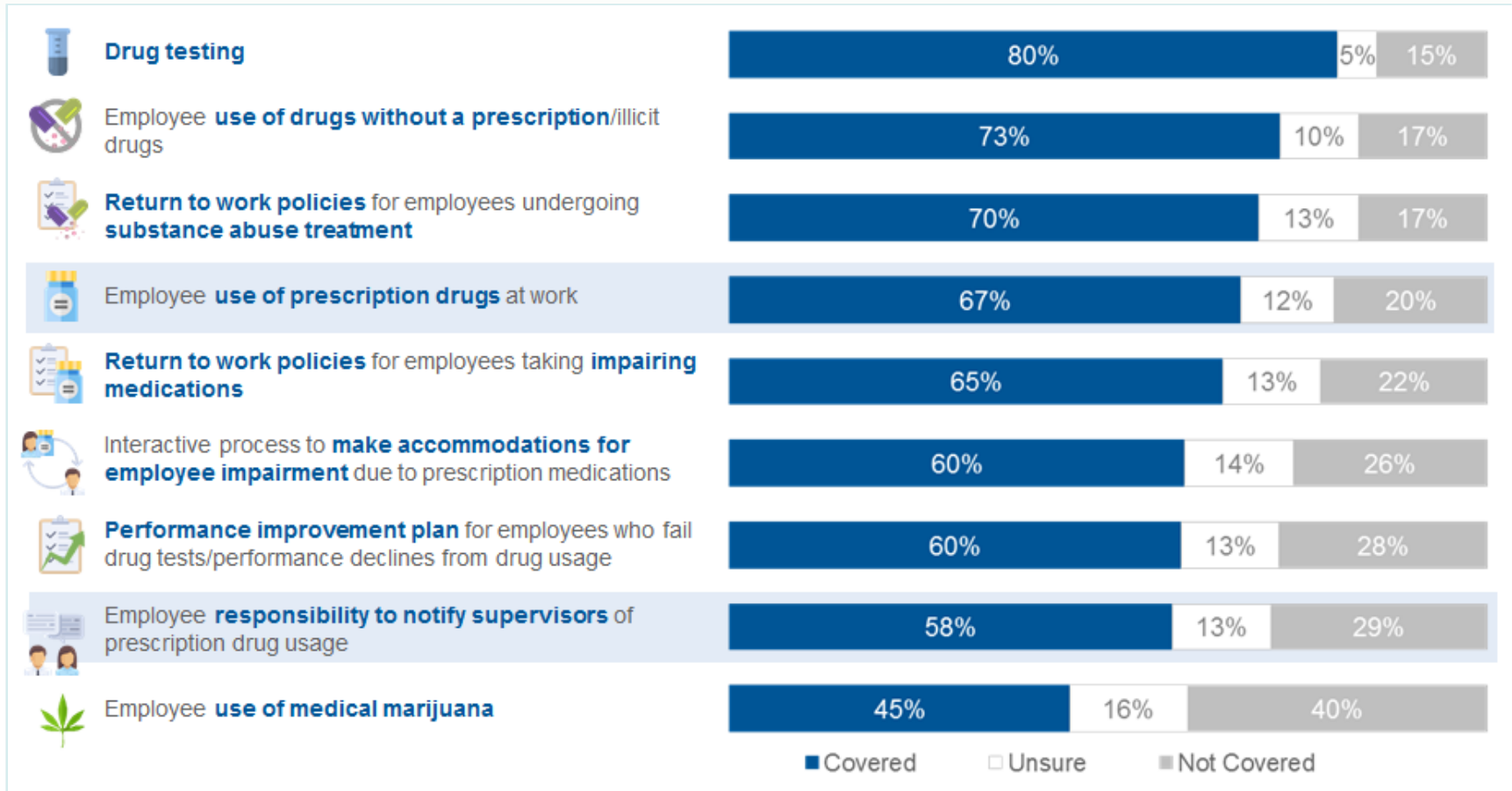
Only 19% Feel 'Extremely Prepared' to Deal with the Issue



Q19. Taking everything into account, how well prepared do you think your organization is when it comes to dealing with handling misuse or abuse of prescription medication?



81% of Policies Are Incomplete



Q11. Which of the following topics are specifically covered in your organization's written policies?

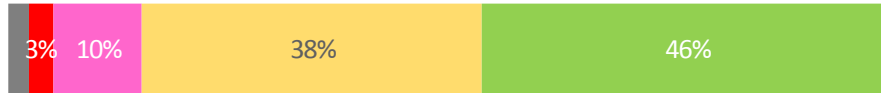
Base: 501
(All Respondents)



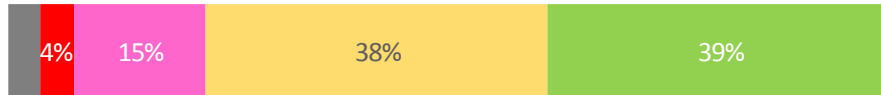
Confidence in Policies and Procedures is Low



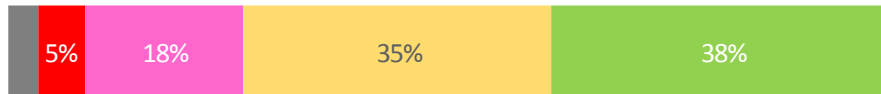
Have in place **appropriate policies** for this issue



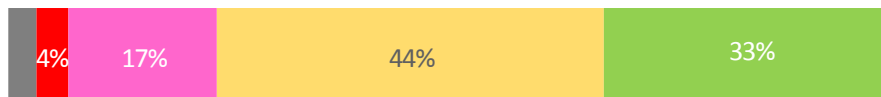
Insurance and benefits appropriately structured to deal with this issue



Have in place appropriate **processes for helping workers with recovery** after treatment



Quality of **procedures for supervisors or managers to follow** once they have identified workers who are potentially impaired or addicted



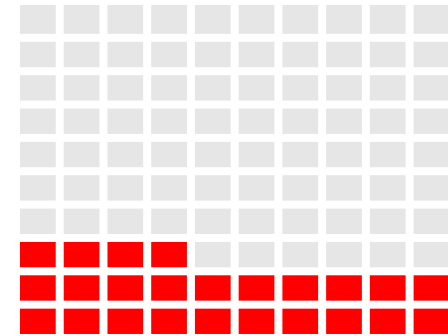
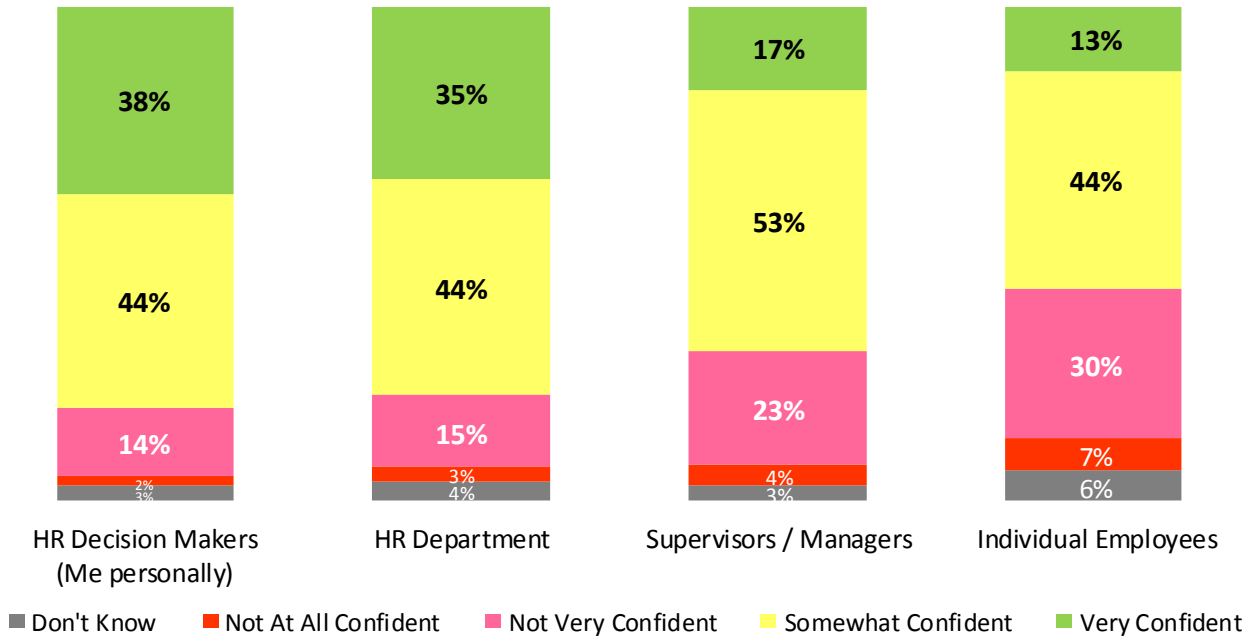
■ Don't Know ■ Not At All Confident ■ Not Very Confident ■ Somewhat Confident ■ Very Confident

Base: 501
(All Respondents)

Q9. How confident do you feel about your organization when it comes to the following aspects of handling misuse or abuse of prescription drugs?



Only 13% are 'Very Confident' Employees can Identify Abuse; 76% do not Provide Necessary Training



24%

Employers offer workplace **training** about prescription drugs

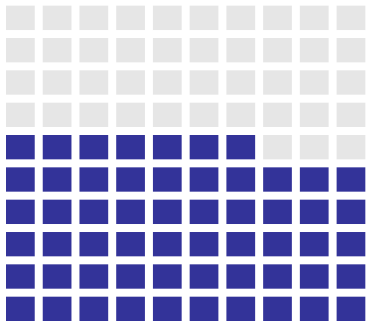
Base: 501
(All Respondents)

Q8. How confident are you that the following functions within your organization can correctly identify behavior that is a warning sign of misuse or abuse of prescription drugs?

Q12. Which of the following are true of your organization?



Only 57% Drug Test All Employees, and 41% Fail to Screen for Synthetic Opioids



57%

Employers perform **drug testing on any employees**

Q12. Which of the following are true of your organization?

Base: 501
(All Respondents)

5 Panel
Drug Test

	% Tested For
Cannabinoids (Marijuana, THC)	78%
Cocaine	77%
Opiates (Codeine, Morphine, Heroin)	76%
Amphetamines (including Methamphetamine) (Adderall, Ritalin, etc.)	67%
Barbiturates (Seconal, phenobarbital, etc.)	59%
Synthetic Opioids (Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Dilaudid, Fentanyl, etc.)	59%
Phencyclidine (PCP)	57%
Methaqualone (Quaaludes)	47%
Benzodiazepines (Xanax, Ativan, Klonopin, Valium, etc.)	47%
Methadone	44%
Propoxyphene	31%
Not Sure	16%

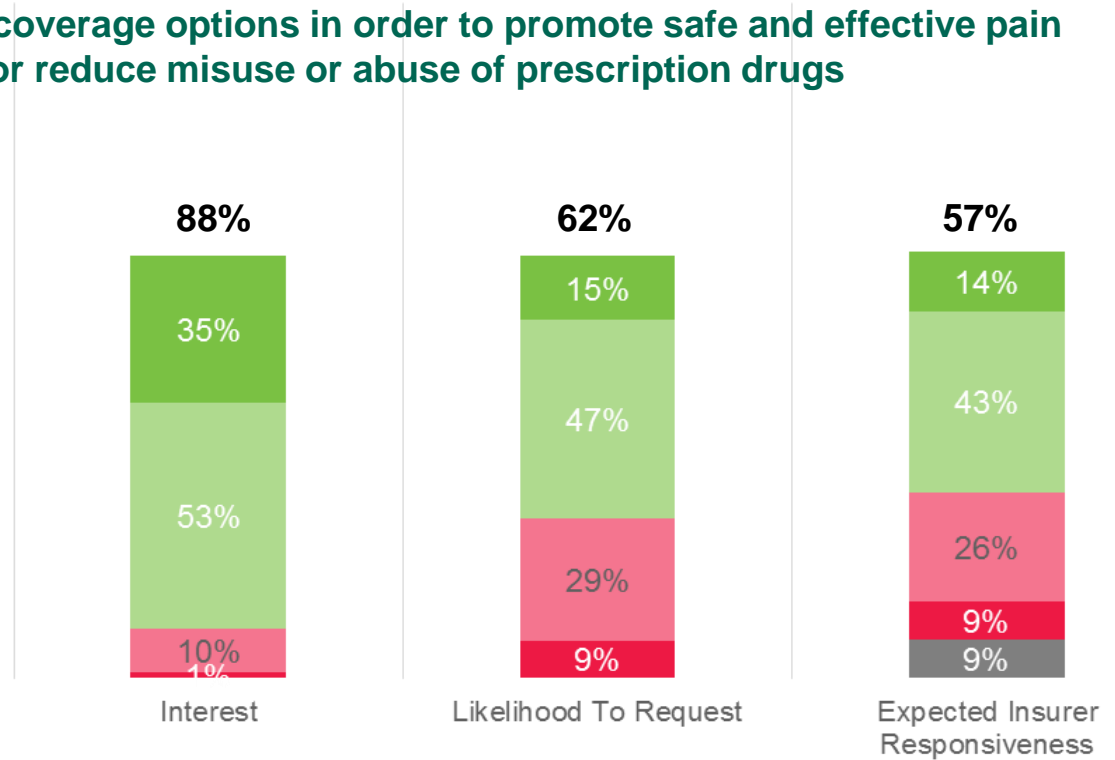
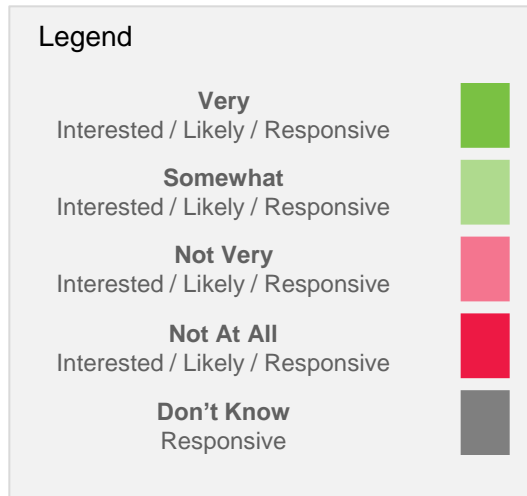
Q18. Which substances are tested for?

Base: 286
(Performs Drug Testing)



88% are Interested in Insurance Coverage for Alternative Pain Treatments

Insurer changing treatment or coverage options in order to promote safe and effective pain management and/or reduce misuse or abuse of prescription drugs



Q22. Assuming you were given evidence that the following would be more effective in treating pain than prescription drugs, how interested would be in having your plan cover these alternative treatment options at cost similar to prescription copays?

Q24. How likely are you to request that ... [as above]

Q25. How responsive do you expect your insurer would be ... [as above]

Base: 501
(All Respondents)



70% Would Like to Help Employees Struggling with Prescription Drug Misuse



Prescription Drugs

Return them to their position after appropriate treatment	48%	} 70%
Ensure they have careful monitoring for the rest of their employment with my firm	22%	
Dismiss them	20%	
Ignore the problem	3%	
Relocate them to positions of lesser responsibility	2%	
Other (most mentions: 'drug test', 'EAP', 'unsure')	5%	

Base: 501
(All Respondents)

Q10. Which of the following, would you say best reflects your organization's approach to an employee who is found to be misusing or abusing ...?



What Employers Can Do

- ✓ Recognize prescription drugs have a big impact on your workplace
- ✓ Put strong policies in place
- ✓ Expand drug testing panels to include opioids
- ✓ Train supervisors and employees how to spot signs of misuse
- ✓ Treat substance use problems as a disease
- ✓ Leverage Employee Assistance Programs to help employees return to work

- Employer Prescription Drug Kit
- Report: *The Proactive Role Employers Can Take*
- Report: *A Fatal Cure for Injured Workers*
- Report: *Prescription Nation*
- Report: *Evidence for the Efficacy of Pain Medications*
- Report: *The Psychological and Physical Side Effects of Pain Medications*





Contact:
NSC Public Relations Team
(630) 775-2307
media@nsc.org

