New Study Shows Effectiveness of Worksite Prevention Programs in Tackling Opioid and Prescription Drug Abuse

While treatment remains the most prevalent approach to the “opioid epidemic,” findings point to the efficacy of early intervention via onsite and web-based training to increase participant knowledge of prescription drug use, misuse, and health-based alternatives. This training is based on OWLS programs acknowledged by the U.S. Surgeon General as reducing substance abuse in work settings.

FORT WORTH, TX (PRWEB) April 24, 2017 -- OWLS (Organizational Wellness and Learning Systems), a science-based consulting and training service in the area of Integral Organizational Wellness™, today announced new findings of a research study that demonstrated the effectiveness of a training for reducing risks for prescription drug (Rx) misuse. Company employees participating in the “Empowered Health Consciousness” training program reported that it improved their knowledge about Rx misuse and increased their confidence about using safe alternatives. The training is based on two OWLS programs that were cited in the 2016 Surgeon General’s report, “Facing Addiction in America,” as the only ones that met their criteria for effectiveness for workplace prevention.

These new findings support an early intervention approach in addressing the problem before it escalates. To date, most workplace focus has been on drug screening and treatment, by which time the pattern of abuse and its negative effects have become deeply entrenched.

It’s become increasingly commonplace for employees to use prescription medication outside of intended use to improve job performance, overcome lack of sleep, or to alleviate pain. The resulting misuse has implications for employee health, absenteeism, productivity and safety. In late 2016, two national surveys indicated the need for more Rx abuse prevention in workplaces. Although 70% of employers are negatively impacted by Rx abuse, less than 25% educate workers on prevention (How the Prescription Drug Crisis is Impacting American Employers). Thirty percent do not provide access to alternative treatments (Mental Health and Substance Abuse Benefits: 2016 Survey Results, International Foundation of Employee Benefits Plans).

“The study comes on the heels of the Surgeon General’s landmark report that recognized the effectiveness of our wellness-based approach to workplace prevention and its focus on healthy alternatives through easy-to-use and access ‘Lunch & Learn’ training sessions,” said OWLS CEO and founder Dr. Joel Bennett. “Compared to before the training, participants reported more motivation to avoid Rx and greater ability to identify healthy alternatives for dealing with pain or stress. These are a necessary first step in helping people make better choices and improving their well-being while also bringing much needed relief to an increasingly critical employer pain point.”

Findings suggest that a prevention-focused training program can de-stigmatize substance abuse prevention (and treatment), lowering barriers for employees needing support and direction. The study recommended that companies leverage their existing EAP and/or well-being initiatives as delivery channels for integrating an evidence-based approach to prescription drug education and prevention.

The study was lead by Dr. Bennett and Dr. Gale Lucas, a Senior Research Associate in the Institute for Creative Technologies with the University of Southern California. For more on the program and the study, visit
http://organizationalwellness.com/workplace-prevention-prescription-drug-misuse-learning-psycho-educational-program

About OWLS

OWLS’ purpose is to help businesses understand, improve, and maintain the positive feedback system between worker health and total organizational health. Their work is based on scientific research and is customized to meet each business’s unique set of needs, risks, and current level of wellness. OWLS uses a variety of tools to help, including employee surveys, culture audits, workshops, coaching at all levels (worker to executive), team retreats, design of assessment or performance appraisal systems, and policy development. OWLS’ clients have included both corporate and small businesses, as well as organizations in federal and local governments, military, hotel/restaurant, healthcare, construction, Native American organizations, police and 9-1-1, professional organizations, and higher education. For more, visit www.organizationalwellness.com.
Contact Information
Charles Epstein
BackBone
http://www.backboneinc.com
(561) 470-0965

Joel Bennett
OWLS
http://www.organizationalwellness.com
561-470-0965

Online Web 2.0 Version
You can read the online version of this press release here.