

Employment and the Opioid Crisis in Ohio:

How Extension, community partners and the Americans with Disabilities Act can support local employers

Laura Akgerman, Disability Services Coordinator, Ohio AgrAbility and OSU Extension, and Godwin Apaliyah, Extension Educator, Community Development, Director, Fayette County Economic Development

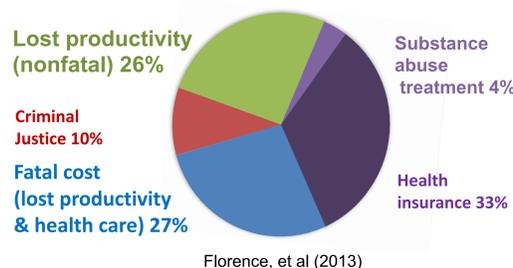
Introduction: The purpose of this proposed study is to identify how Extension Educators and community partners can support individuals in recovery from substance abuse who want to reenter the job market, and to increase knowledge of the protections and limits of the Americans with Disabilities Act for employees and employers.

Ohio's opioid crisis is costing the state billions in lost work productivity, as well as the cost of medical treatments, and social services.

People who are recovering from substance abuse addiction may find it difficult to find or retain work, and may lack knowledge about resources and support that can help them succeed at work.

Literature Review:

The Economic and Societal Burden of Prescription Opioid Overdose, Abuse and Dependence

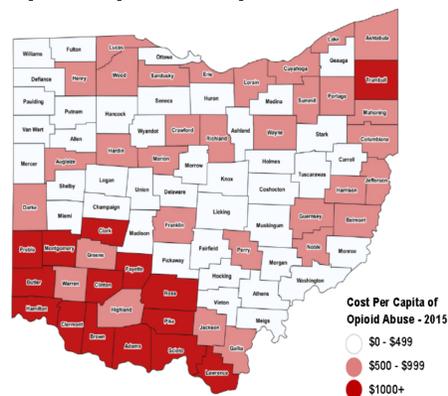


Methodology:

Two sources of data were used for this poster:

- Interviews with local employers about their experiences with substance abused employees, drug treatment/recovery centers, community and state agencies
- Researchers also reviewed existing data from secondary sources such as websites on the internet, journal articles and OSU Swank Program, authors calculation

Cost per capita of Opioid Abuse - 2015



Impact of Opioids and Substance Abuse on Employment and the Community

Ohio has one of the highest drug overdose deaths per capita in the country

- OSU Swank Program on Rural-Urban Policy estimates that in 2015 92,000 to 170,000 Ohioans abused or were dependent on opioids
- Opioid abuse cost Ohio \$2.8 billion to \$5 billion in 2015 (treatment, criminal justice, lost productivity)
- 2015 total estimated annual cost of opioid addiction, abuse and overdose deaths \$6.6 billion to \$8.8 billion
- Lifetime lost productivity from opioid deaths in 2015 estimated at \$3.8 billion, reduce productivity at work by 17% among men, and 18% among women

Experience of Local Employers who hire employees in recovery from substance abuse:

Benefits:

- The employees are eager to work, and "Have fire in their eyes" – Jon Rupert, Distinctive Surfaces
- Employees hold each other accountable and mentor each other, coach, and have a good job tenure

Barriers

- Some employees lack life skills and resources
- Don't know how to open a bank account, or make a budget to pay bills
 - Show up for (construction) work in tennis shoes and a t-shirt, they don't have boots, jeans or a coat
 - They don't have transportation because they had their drivers license suspended

Role of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

The ADA is a federal law that protects people from discrimination based on their disability. Its purpose is "to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities" especially at workplace.

ADA protects employees and employers:

- Employees can request reasonable accommodations from employees to help mitigate the impact of their disability on their work
- Employees with disabilities may be disciplined or terminated if they are not satisfactorily performing work duties, (if accommodations do not help with work performance)

Businesses may qualify for a tax credit for providing accommodations:

- IRS form 8826 "Disabled Access Credit" – up to \$5,000 credit for accommodations, barrier removal, alterations to make the business accessible, purchase of adaptive equipment



Role of Community Partners

- Build /welcome local drug treatment centers
- Provide transportation to treatment centers and victims
- Support Recovery housing initiatives and education to reduce stigma
- Treat substance abuse disorders the same as any other diseases and encourage employers to consider a job applicants qualifications instead of criminal history

Role of OSU Extension

Convener:

- Identify stakeholders – gain their support and cooperation and work with them to design and carry out the process

Networker & Facilitator:

- Identify and link community partners with opioid addiction resources and services
- Intervenes to help group reach agreement
- Facilitating group discussion and decision making

Program designer:

- Identifies public issues and key stakeholders
- Analyzes situation & needs and design long-range education program and action steps

Researcher:

- Conducts objective analysis
- Explains how results of research apply to issue

Conclusion

To minimize the impact of the Opioid crisis Universities, and Extension, have to play a major role in bringing partners together because they have the greatest potential to generate positive change in communities

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Americans with Disabilities Act www.ada.osu
- Florence, C., Zhou, C., Luo, F., Xu, L. (2016). The Economic Burden of Prescription Opioid Overdose, Abuse and Dependence in the United States, 2013. *Medical Care*, 2016;54:901-906.
- Rembert, M., Betz, M., Fend, B., Partridge, M. (2017). Taking Measure of Ohio's Opioid Crisis. Swank Program in Rural-Urban Policy. The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.
- Smutko, S., Ayres, J., Babbitt, K., Corcoran, P., Culik, M., Dorsey, M. Frey, L., Haaland, K., Peters, S., Singletary, L. Public Issues Education: Increasing Competence, Enabling Communities. National Public Policy Education Committee. Cooperative Extension Public Issues Education Competencies task Force.