Employment and Substance Abuse Facts

1. White House Council of Economic Advisors 2017 estimates that the cost of the opioid crisis, including health care, criminal justice, lost productivity, and the value of lives lost was $504 billion in 2015 (2.8% of GDP).

2. The 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reports:
   - In 2016, an estimated 11.8 million people misused opioids in the past year, including 11.5 million pain reliever misusers and 948,000 heroin users.

3. According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Inc. (NCADD), drug abuse costs employers $81 billion annually.
   - In addition, according to NCADD, drug abuse can cause problems at work including:
     - After-effects of substance use (withdrawal) affecting job performance.
     - Preoccupation with obtaining and using substances while at work, interfering with attention and concentration.
     - Illegal activities at work including selling illegal drugs to other employees.
     - Psychological or stress-related effects due to drug use by a family member, friend or co-worker that affects another person’s job performance.

4. More than 75% of individuals with alcohol or illicit drug use disorders continue to maintain their employment.¹

5. Of the approximately $600 billion economic cost that is related to alcohol and other drug use problems in the U.S. each year, the vast majority is due to lost productivity.²

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6. Costs of the Opioid Epidemic by Year and Payer

7. Total and Projected Costs of the Opioid Epidemic

8. Nearly 21 million Americans are living with substance use disorder, according to the U.S. Surgeon General. That’s more than the total number of people living with of cancer and more than the population of the state of New York.

9. Workers with pain medication use disorders miss nearly six weeks (29 days) of work annually.

10. Studies place the average cost to employers of recruiting and training replacement workers at 21 percent of a worker’s annual salary.

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