



Challenges of Chronic Pain and Drug Use in Transportation

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Industry Impact

- 2012 Impact on Industry – Days away from work (MSD's)
 - Laborers and Freight Handling – 26,770 (#1)
 - Heavy and Tractor Trailer Drivers – 14,490 (#4)
 - Light Truck Drivers – 10,120 (#6)

- Construction Laborer – 5,010

Industry Impact

- Prescription drug abuse is a national problem that is having a serious effect on workers' compensation costs. Consider the following facts:
- Research by the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) shows that prescription drugs account for 19% of all workers' compensation medical costs.
- Increased utilization of prescription drugs plays a big role in driving up per-claim drug costs, which grew 12% in 2009, the last year for which NCCI published data.

Industry Impact

- Also on the rise, according to NCCI, is physician dispensing of drugs (doctors filling prescriptions from their office rather than a pharmacy), which is associated with increased drug costs per claim.
- OxyContin[®] is now the number one prescribed workers' compensation drug, up from number three, and accounts for 6% of workers' compensation medication costs.
- A recent study found that when certain opioid painkillers were prescribed for workers' compensation injuries, the total cost of those claims were almost four times more likely to exceed \$100,000 than claims where opioids were not prescribed.

A true epidemic...

- Statistics from the National Institute of Health show that more than 50% of truck drivers are obese, compared to the national rate of 26.7%.



Chronic Pain and Obesity

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- *“The relationship between obesity and pain is not a direct one but is mediated by various factors. Such factors include biomechanical/ structural changes associated with obesity, inflammatory mediators, mood disturbance, poor sleep, and lifestyle issues. In particular, research on potential chemical mediators linking obesity with pain is rapidly growing.”*

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4508090/>

Mechanisms to combat the issue

- Pre-Hire Screening – Baseline Functional Capacity Testing and EFA-STM Program
- Candidate Selection Criteria and procedures
- New Employee Orientation
- Supervisory Capabilities



Injury Prevention

- Job Hazard Analysis – Real, collective focus on how our drivers are getting hurt, what(if any) controls are in place, and how well does our workforce embody these efforts.
- Administrative controls – How do we handle workers in high heat, loud, or excessive vibration exposures?

Claims Management

- Special Handling Instructions with the Insurance Carrier/Panel Doctors
- 24/7 Nurse Triage Program
- Nurse Case Management
- Opiate drug testing procedures



Supportive Wellness Programs

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- Supportive Wellness Programs
- Due to an unhealthy lifestyle and lack of good nutritional options while traveling, truck drivers are categorically one of the unhealthiest populations in our country.

