

Better Health 4 YOU

SMART Local 36 Benefit Fund

4/1/2018

Edition 4, Volume 1



NO JUDGEMENT HERE!

Substance Abuse Disorder and the road to RECOVERY

If you, or a family member, are struggling with an alcohol or substance abuse problem you may feel like recovery is impossible. It isn't. Your SMART Local Union No. 36 Welfare Fund has resources to help you. You can always reach out confidentially to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that is part of the SMART Local Union No. 36 Welfare Fund or contact the Welfare Fund Nurse Case Manager at the Fund Office. In addition to the resources through the Welfare Fund, Sheet Metal Workers Local 36 is proud to announce that our brother, Chris Ballowe, has completed training to become a Missouri Recovery Support Peer Specialist. Chris' training supplements the knowledge, understanding and expertise he has gained through his life experiences. Chris has offered to share his experience, strength and hope with his

brothers and sisters so that they can learn what recovery looks and feels like. He is someone who can speak to you from experience about the struggles of substance abuse and the recovery process. He can give you ideas about options that could be available including options through the Welfare Fund. The leadership at Local 36 believes this is a valuable service and wants to let you know about it. Local 36 is also allowing Chris to use space at the hall to meet with members and their families. Local 36 is grateful to Chris for offering his services but remember, Chris is a volunteer and he is not doing this as an employee of Local 36. He is not associated with the Welfare Fund and cannot quote benefits or tell you what will or will not be covered by the Fund. For this information call the Fund Office at 314-652-8175.

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“No one knows what recovery looks like”-

Chris Ballowe

All information received at the Fund office is completely CONFIDENTIAL.

We must understand opioid use disorder is a medical illness, and it is still being overshadowed by its misconception as a moral weakness or a willful choice.

Let's help STOP the stigma!

Opioid Overdose Crisis

Facts About Abuse

Every day, more than 115 Americans die after overdosing on opioids. The misuse of and

addiction to opioids—including prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl—is a serious national crisis that affects public health as well as social and economic welfare. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the total "economic burden" of prescription opioid misuse alone in the United States is \$78.5 billion a year, including the costs of healthcare, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement.

How did this happen?

In the late 1990s, pharmaceutical companies reassured the medical community that patients would not become addicted to prescription opioid pain relievers, and healthcare providers began to prescribe them at greater rates. This subsequently led to widespread diversion and misuse of these medications before it became clear that these medications could indeed be highly addictive. Opioid overdose rates began to increase. In 2015, more than 33,000 Americans died as a result of an opioid overdose, including prescription opioids, heroin, and illicitly manufactured fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid.¹ That same year, an estimated 2 million people in the United States suffered from substance use disorders related to prescription opioid pain relievers, and 591,000 suffered from a heroin use disorder (not mutually exclusive).

What do we know about the opioid crisis?

- Roughly 21 to 29 percent of patients prescribed opioids for chronic pain misuse them.
- Between 8 and 12 percent develop an opioid use disorder.
- An estimated 4 to 6 percent who misuse prescription opioids transition to heroin.
- About 80 percent of people who use heroin first misused prescription opioids.
- Opioid overdoses increased 30 percent from July 2016 through September 2017 in 52 areas in 45 states.
- The Midwestern region saw opioid overdoses increase 70 percent from July 2016 through September 2017.
- Opioid overdoses in large cities increase by 54 percent in 16 states.

This issue has become a public health crisis with devastating consequences including increases in opioid misuse and related overdoses, as well as the rising incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome due to opioid use and misuse during pregnancy. The increase in injection drug use has also contributed to the spread of infectious diseases including HIV and hepatitis C. As seen throughout the history of medicine, science can be an important part of the solution in resolving such a public health crisis.

"The Officers and Benefit Fund Staff want our members to know that everything we do for them is kept confidential, not only as required by law, but also by our office policies, and the SMART Constitution and Ritual. We are dedicated to help our members and their families with ANY problems, especially drug and alcohol-related issues. No one has to worry about permanently losing their employment. If a member fails a substance abuse test, they are immediately referred to E4 Health, our Employee Assistance provider. E4 Health will meet with the member and generate a HealthMap plan specific to the member's individual needs. Upon successful completion of their counseling and any other requirements set forth in their HealthMap, members go back to work. Our program is designed to help our members; not cast them aside. Ask for help before you fail your drug test, so you can be treated while working."

-Dave Zimmermann, Business Manager SMART Local 36

Helpful Telephone Numbers

Chris Ballowe, Certified Peer Support Specialist
314-900-1283

E4 Health
972-810-3066

SMW Benefit Office
314-652-8175

Mary Beth Cyliax RN, CCM

314-652-8175 ext. 310

Call me anytime with questions

All information contained within this newsletter is intended for educational purposes only. Members should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something they may have read on this website. Information obtained from NIH on Drug Abuse website.