



## **Evidence-Based Employee Mental Health Benefit Programs Are Needed**

Heritage CARES experiences significant uptick in employer inquiries for its virtual support program that helps employees struggling with stress, depression and anxiety, substance misuse and suicidal ideation

**Coppell, TX (Feb. 10, 2022)** – More than a year into the pandemic, overdose deaths in the U.S. [skyrocketed to a record 100,306, a 28.5% increase](#) over the year prior at 78,056, according to provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). While this increase is horrifically high, it is not surprising. Lockdowns, work from home and the stress and uncertainty of COVID-19 led more Americans to turn to substances to cope than ever before. Those already with a substance use disorder (SUD) found treatment harder than ever to get. Mental health declined at a rate never seen before and coupled together with the fact that 9.5% of full-time employees admit to struggling with SUD, there are significant concerns. These shocking statistics serve as a stark reminder for American employers that they must begin discussing SUDs and focus on the overall mental well-being of employees and their families.

According to the National Safety Council's [Implications of Drug Use for Employers](#), employees with SUDs:

- Account for 9% of the total workforce
- Miss five workweeks annually for illness or injury (2 weeks more than non-SUD employees)
- Are more likely to report having more than one employer, totaling roughly 40% within the past 12 months (18% higher than non-SUD employees)
- Cost employers more than \$14,000 a year if left untreated

According to [Mental Health America](#), 2022 The State of Mental Health in America:

- In 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic, 19.86% of adults experienced a mental illness, equivalent to nearly 50 million Americans.
- Suicidal ideation continues to increase among adults in the U.S. 4.58% of adults report having serious thoughts of suicide, an increase of 664,000 people from last year's dataset. The national rate of suicidal ideation among adults has increased every year since 2011-2012. This was a more significant increase than seen in last year's report and is a concerning trend to see going into the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Over half of adults with a mental illness do not receive treatment, totaling over 27 million adults in the U.S.

And, in a report from [SilverCloud Health](#), approximately two-thirds of American workers have clinically measurable mental health symptoms of anxiety or depression. Additionally, the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) reported that mental health conditions cost employers more than [\\$100 billion in revenue and 217 million lost workdays](#) each year.

Employers also need to be concerned about employees with family members coping with mental health and SUDs. Mental health and SUDs affect the entire family. A recent Gallup poll shows that 18% of workers go home to addiction every day. Often, these family members have higher stress, absenteeism and lost productivity than their peers.

"We know that many people with mental disorders and substance use disorders go hand in hand. The same is true for suicide and overdoses," said Hamilton Baiden, [Heritage Health Solutions and Heritage CARES](#) president. "We've been saying this for years. But unfortunately, it wasn't until The Great Resignation in the COVID-19-era workplace that employers started paying attention. Employers must find evidence-based support programs for their employees to be a preferred employer. Mental health days and posters in the break room just don't cut it."

There has never been a more critical time to consider mental health benefits packages that support employees and their family members alike.

Dallas-based [Heritage CARES](#) has seen a significant uptick in employer inquiries for its virtual support program that helps employees struggling with stress, depression and anxiety, substance misuse and suicidal ideation throughout the pandemic. The company provides innovative, evidence-based care to employees and their families by providing vital education, insight and support.

Employers who utilize Heritage CARES can give their employees and families access to:

- **Education** – youturn is Heritage CARES online learning management system. It is one of the largest video libraries in the nation, full of educational, inspiring and insightful videos designed to increase understanding of stress, anxiety and wellness.
- **Peer Coaching** - State-certified Assertive Community Engagement (ACE) NAADAC trained coaches meet participants where they are at in their journey and support them through it. They also understand which community resources and programs best fit each participant's situation.
- **Care Management** – Participants can quickly communicate with trained health care professionals during times of crisis and receive an analysis of potential substance misuse and suicide risks.

Heritage CARES supports participants and their families and introduces new healthier ways of coping, including:

- Boundary Setting
- Understanding Addictive Habits
- Self-Care and Coping Strategies
- Mindfulness
- Intervention and Strategies
- Stress Management

"Every indicator is showing us the urgent need for reliable mental health resources that not only support employees and their families but also lead to healthier workplace environments and a healthier bottom line," said Baiden.

Please visit [Heritage CARES](#) or call 877-62CARES (22737) for more information on Heritage CARES.

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### **About Heritage CARES**

Heritage CARES (Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Education and Support) is part of the Heritage Health Solutions family. It provides innovative virtual support programs designed specifically for employers, treatment centers, first-responders and reentry programs. The Heritage CARES programs help individuals and their family members struggling with stress, substance misuse, addiction, suicidal ideation and grief utilizing evidence-based strategies. The core components of the comprehensive vertical program include on-demand access to one of the largest online learning libraries, NAADAC credentialed peer coaching and care management where participants can quickly communicate with trained health care professionals during times of crisis. For more information on Heritage CARES, visit [Heritage CARES](#) or call 877-62CARES (22737) or email [help@heritage-cares.com](mailto:help@heritage-cares.com).

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