

# HR Brief

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March 2018

## New HHS Secretary is Focused on Opioid Crisis, You Should Be Too

A recent study by the National Business Group on Health (NBGH) revealed that 80 percent of large employers are concerned about employees' abuse of prescription opioids.

The government is concerned, too. With about 91 Americans dying from a prescription opioid overdose every day, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) declared a public health emergency in October 2017. Tackling the opioid crisis is a top concern for the new HHS Secretary Alex Azar.

Employers across the country are working to curb the misuse of prescription opioids. With more employees falling victim to addiction,

employers are seeing lower productivity, higher health care costs and fewer qualified applicants.

Employers need to do everything possible to combat the impact opioids have in the workplace. Exploring new initiatives can help you develop your own strategy to best suit the needs of your employees. The NBGH's survey revealed that the following five initiatives are the most common among employers across the country:

1. Provide opioid abuse training in the workplace to increase awareness.
2. Work with health plans to encourage physicians to consider alternative treatment for pain.
3. Expand coverage for pain management alternatives.
4. Limit coverage of opioids to a network of pharmacies or providers.
5. Limit the number of opioids on initial prescriptions.

For more information on what you can do about opioid abuse, contact us today.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Ninety-two percent of U.S. employers say that the severe skills shortage experienced by industries is negatively affecting employee productivity, engagement and retention, according to the Hays U.S. 2018 Salary Guide.

Respondents revealed that a lack of training and development and fewer workers entering their industries were the main causes of the shortage. Contact us for training and onboarding resources to make sure your business gets on the right track.

## 4 Things You Can Do to Manage Worst Flu in Decades

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the 2017-18 flu is the worst since the 2009 swine flu pandemic, and it's not expected to go away anytime soon.

To keep your workforce as healthy as possible, consider the following four suggestions:

1. Encourage employees to get the flu vaccine if they haven't already done so.
2. Allow sick employees to work from home.
3. Post information about the flu around the workplace.
4. Remind employees that frequent hand-washing is key in flu prevention.

Contact us for flu prevention materials or for more information on the seasonal flu.

