

# American Drug Testing

Drug-Free Workplace Programs

Volume 1

Issue 155

(843) 747-4111

## DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ADVISOR

AN ONGOING SERIES TO PROTECT YOUR COMPANY BY HELPING TO KEEP DRUGS OUT OF YOUR WORKPLACE.

### Hydrocodone and Oxycodones Lead Workforce Positives

American workers continue to use prescription opiates at relatively high levels, according to Drug Testing Index™ (DTI). Hydrocodone and oxycodones remain the most detected prescription opiates in the U.S. general workforce, with 1.3% and 1.1% positivity rates, respectively, in the first half of 2011. Compared to 2005 levels, oxycodones are 96% higher (0.56% vs. 1.1%) and hydrocodone 47% higher (0.88% vs. 1.3%) in positive prevalence.

According to Drug Testing Index data from urine drug tests, only marijuana, at 2.0% in the first half of 2011, holds a positivity rate higher than hydrocodone (1.3%) and oxycodones (1.1%). This ranking is consistent with 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health self-reported survey findings recently released by the U.S. Substance Abuse

and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), showing mari-

*“these powerful and highly addictive drugs can present serious health dangers to those who misuse them...”*

juana as the top drug associated with initiation of illicit drug use and pain relievers as second in ranking.

"The use and misuse of prescription opiates continue to capture national attention," said Dr. Barry Sample, Quest Diagnostics Director of Science and Technology for Employer Solutions.

"The findings of this study reinforce the need for businesses to develop and communicate clear policies around both the medical and non-medical use of these drugs, especially for their safety-sensitive workers. Empowering employees to perform duties safely, act appropriately when they perceive risk, and understand clearly the consequences of non-medical use

of these drugs and of being found to have violated their employer's drug policy all play an important role in worker and public safety."

Random drug testing and post-accident testing detected dramatically more positives for prescription opiates than pre-



employment drug testing from January 2011 through June 2011 in the U.S. general workforce. Pre-employment screening revealed a 0.85% positivity rate for hydrocodone and a 0.65% positivity rate for oxycodones. However, random drug test positivity was nearly double, at 1.6% and 1.2%, respectively. Post-accident testing for hydrocodone and oxycodones continue to reveal dramatically higher rates of positivity at 3.7% and 1.8%, respectively.

"Prescription opiates are effective for managing pain and have been shown to improve patients' quality of life," said Jon R. Cohen, M.D. "However, when used outside of a prescription and without the guidance of a physician, these powerful and highly addictive drugs can present serious health dangers to those who misuse them, and serious risks

to workplace and public safety."

Recent government efforts to address the national epidemic of non-medical use


of prescription drugs include the recent U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) "take-back" initiative in April,

which collected more than 188 tons of prescription medications nationwide, and the upcoming National Prescription Drug Take Back Day scheduled to take place on October 29, 2011.

#### Implications for Your Drug Testing Program

In addition to your random drug testing program, consider adding hair testing. Hair testing expands the window for detection up to 90 days for prescription opiates. For more information, contact us at 843-747-4111 or see the "client area" at

[www.AmericanDrugTesting.net](http://www.AmericanDrugTesting.net)



**The Drug-Free Workplace Advisor** is published by American Drug Testing, a leading drug-free workplace administrator and testing company. Call (843) 747-4111.

**Distribution List**

- \_\_\_\_\_ HR
- \_\_\_\_\_ Management
- \_\_\_\_\_ Office Staff
- \_\_\_\_\_ Manufacturing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_