

The NHSDA Report

September 27, 2002

Awareness of Workplace Substance Use Policies and Programs

In Brief

- Among full-time workers aged 18 to 49, those in administrative support occupations were more likely than workers in other occupations to be aware of written workplace policies about employee substance use
- Workers in the transportation, communication, and other public utilities industries were more likely than workers in other industries to be aware of substance use testing at their workplaces
- About 53 percent of workers were aware of substance use employee assistance programs at their workplaces

The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) includes questions about the respondent's work status, type of work, as well as substance use policies and employee assistance programs at the workplace.¹ Respondents were classified as *aware* of a substance use policy or program if they responded "yes" to the question of whether or not there were substance use policies or programs at their workplace. Respondents were classified as *unaware* of the policy or program if they responded "no" or "don't know" and were included in the analysis.² In 2000, the NHSDA reported over 107 million persons aged 18 to 49 in the labor force, of whom 82 percent (almost 88 million) worked full-time. This report presents data on full-time workers aged 18 to 49 regarding their knowledge of substance use policies and resources at their workplace.

Awareness of Written Substance Use Policies at the Workplace

In 2000, 76 percent of full-time workers aged 18 to 49 (more than 66 million workers) were aware of written policies on substance use at their workplace. Workers in administrative support occupations (84 percent) were more likely than

Figure 1. Percentages of Full-Time Workers Aged 18 to 49 Reporting Awareness of a Written Policy about Employee Use of Alcohol or Drugs at Their Workplace, by Occupation: 2000

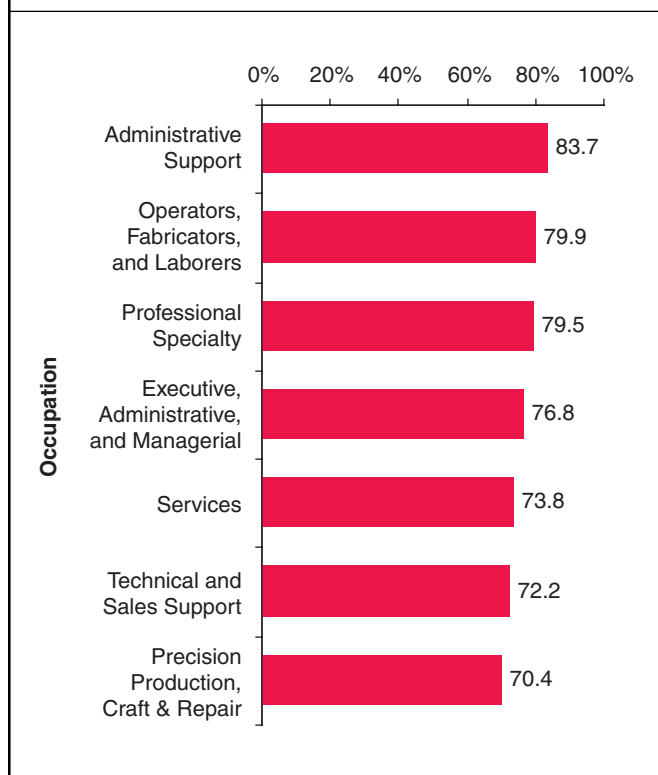
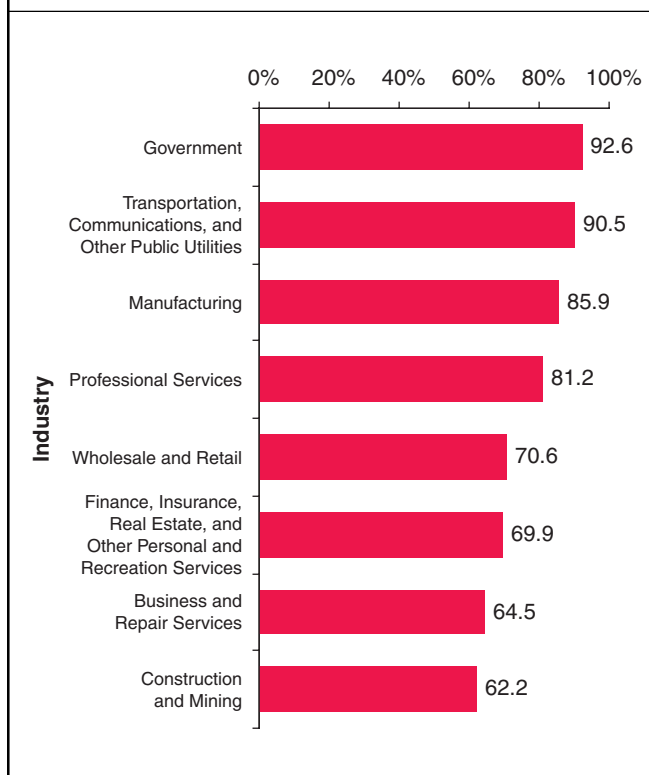


Figure 2. Percentages of Full-Time Workers Aged 18 to 49 Reporting Awareness of a Written Policy about Employee Use of Alcohol or Drugs at Their Workplace, by Industry: 2000



those in other occupations to be aware of such policies (Figure 1). Across industries, workers in government (93 percent) or transportation, communications and other public utilities (91 percent) reported the highest rates of awareness of written policies on substance use at the workplace (Figure 2).

Awareness of Substance Use Testing at the Workplace

Almost 48 percent of full-time workers aged 18 to 49 (almost 42 million workers) were aware of substance use testing at their workplaces. Operators, fabricators, and laborers (69 percent) were more likely, and workers in professional specialty occupations (36 percent)

were less likely, than those in other occupations to be aware of substance use testing at their workplace (Figure 3). Workers in the transportation, communication, and other public utilities industries (76 percent) were more likely than those in other industries to be aware of substance use testing at their workplaces (Figure 4).

Awareness of Employee Assistance Programs at the Workplace

About 53 percent of full-time workers aged 18 to 49 (more than 46 million workers) were aware of access to employee assistance programs for substance abuse through their workplace. Workers in professional specialty occupations (66 percent) were more likely, and

workers in service occupations (41 percent) were less likely, than those in other occupations to be aware of employee assistance programs for substance abuse through their workplace (Figure 3). Workers in precision production, craft, and repair jobs; and operators, fabricators and laborers reported lower rates of awareness of employee assistance programs than rates of awareness of testing for substance use at their workplace, which was the reverse among workers in other occupations.

Across industries, rates of awareness of substance abuse employee assistance programs were highest among workers in government (85 percent) or transportation, communications and other public utilities (71 percent) (Figure 4). Only 36 percent of

Figure 3. Percentages of Full-Time Workers Aged 18 to 49 Reporting Awareness of Workplace Testing for Substance Use or Access to Any Type of Employee Assistance or Counseling Program, by Occupation: 2000

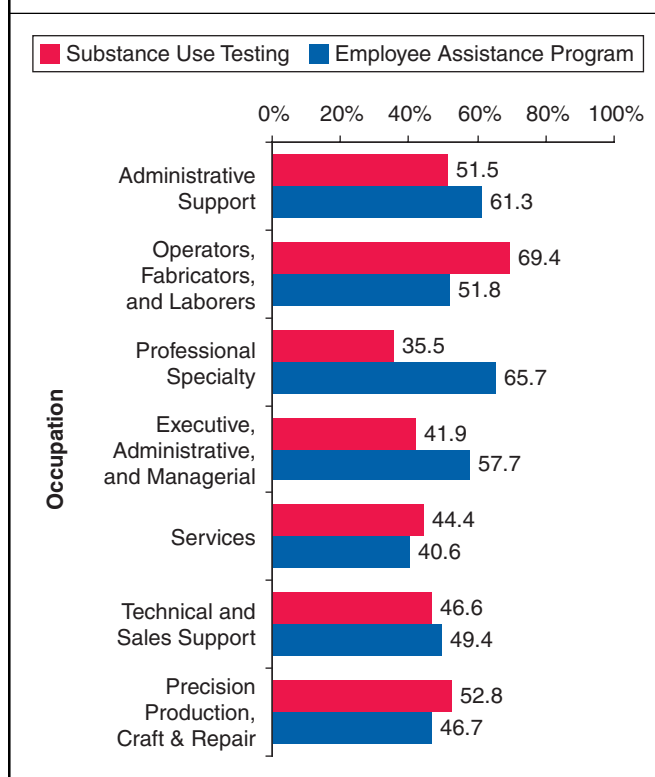
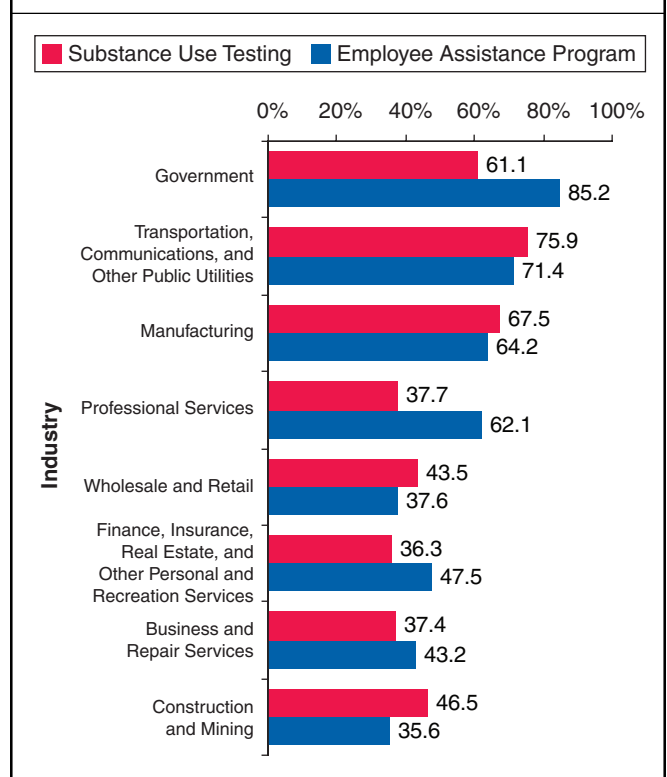


Figure 4. Percentages of Full-Time Workers Aged 18 to 49 Reporting Awareness of Workplace Testing for Substance Use or Access to Any Type of Employee Assistance or Counseling Program, by Industry: 2000



workers in the construction and mining industries were aware of employee assistance programs for substance use.

End Notes

1. Respondents aged 15 or older who reported current employment were asked whether (1) there was a written policy at their workplace about employee use of alcohol or drugs, (2) their workplace ever tests its employees for alcohol use, (3) their workplace ever tests its employees for drug use, or (4) there was access to any type of employee assistance program or other type of counseling program through their workplace for employees who have alcohol- or drug-related problems. For the purpose of this report, substance use testing is defined as testing for alcohol, drugs, or both.
2. Findings represent all employees, regardless of whether their workplace has a written substance use policy, tests employees for substance use, or provides access to employee assistance or counseling programs for substance use problems. Percentages of full-time workers aged 18 to 49 reporting "don't know" were 3.4 percent for written policies, 9.4 percent for employee assistance programs, and 2.6 percent for workplace testing. Respondents who did not respond to the question were excluded from the analysis. The percentages reporting missing were 0.2 percent, 0.2 percent, and 1.1 percent, respectively.

Figure Notes

Source (Figures 1–5): SAMHSA 2000 NHSDA.

The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The 2000 data are based on information obtained from nearly 72,000 persons aged 12 or older, including 24,215 adults aged 18 to 49 employed full-time. The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their place of residence.

The NHSDA Report is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS), SAMHSA, and by RTI in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

Information and data for this issue are based on the following publication and statistics:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2001). *Summary of findings from the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse* (NHSDA Series: H-13, DHHS Publication No. SMA 01-3549). Rockville, MD: Author.

Also available on-line: www.DrugAbuseStatistics.samhsa.gov.

Additional tables available upon request.



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