

# Drug Watch International

## Position Statement

### **DRUG TESTING**

**Drug testing is an effective and humane method to deter and to detect drug use. Drug testing is an important tool to reduce healthcare and workplace costs and to monitor criminal offenders under the jurisdiction of the courts. Drug testing enhances safety for workplaces, schools, and transportation.**

#### **Background:**

Drug-related health costs, crime, and erosion of worker productivity cost billions of dollars annually.<sup>1</sup> Drug testing is a useful tool in combating these problems. The aim of responsible drug testing is to deter drug use and to detect those who need help in overcoming drug problems. The 1994 American Management Association Workplace Drug Testing Survey stated that there is no doubt that drug testing is an effective method of identifying drug users and deterring drug use in the workplace. Numerous studies have shown that random drug testing of students deters drug use. On the public roads, on-site drug testing enables police officers to detect and deter drunk and drugged driving.

#### **Rationale:**

Health care costs have risen dramatically over the past several decades. Drug abuse, especially the abuse of prescription drugs, contributes greatly to these costs.<sup>2</sup> Drug-free workplace programs have been shown to reduce health care costs attributed to drug abuse.<sup>3</sup> Employee drug testing is essential to the success of workplace safety and wellness programs. Drug testing also is a useful tool for improving drug treatment outcomes. It helps to identify drug abusers, to counter denial, and to get people on the road to treatment and recovery.

Drug use affects coordination, alertness, and judgment. A drug-using worker is an unsafe worker and may pose a danger to himself or herself as well as to coworkers. Workers support drug-free workplace programs that include drug testing and, when needed, also provide firm and compassionate education and rehabilitation. In an employment context, initial positive screenings should be confirmed by a certified lab.<sup>4</sup>

Drug use affects motor skills, learning, memory retention, reasoning ability, and coordination. It is difficult, if not impossible, for teachers and school personnel to detect drug use by casual observation. Random drug testing, when used in a comprehensive, school-based program that includes intervention, education, and counseling, has proven to be an effective means of preventing and treating drug abuse.<sup>5</sup>

Drug testing contributes to public safety by adding new levels of flexibility and accuracy to the detection and monitoring of drug-using offenders under the supervision of the criminal justice

system. The authorities use random drug testing to monitor the treatment and rehabilitation of recovering addicts placed on probation or parole.

On the nation's highways, drug testing is used to detect and reduce drugged driving crimes.<sup>6</sup> The accuracy of modern on-site drug testing has been well established and approved by the American Probation and Parole Association Drug Testing Guidelines.<sup>7</sup>

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