BOSTON GLOBE, May 2, 2016: "The Massachusetts heroin epidemic is unlike any other in the United States. The overdose rate in the state is more than twice the national average."

Please join us on June 16th for an Employer-focused conference of vital interest to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: OUR WORKPLACES & THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC is a Massachusetts Health Council morning program created to help Employers understand their role in managing this crisis. Human Resources staff, benefits consultants and executives, managers and supervisors at all levels will receive practical, focused information and strategies. The conference will cover:

- The Nature and Scope of Opioid Addiction & What's Different about this Epidemic
- The Impact of Opioids on Business
- Treatment, Recovery & Prevention
- Participation in Multi-Sector Efforts
- Managing and Supporting Employees While Keeping the Workplace Safe & Productive
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Substance Use Education in the Workplace
- Speaking with an Employee Who May Be Affected by Addiction
- Legal Considerations: Protecting the Employer & the Employee

Misuse of prescription drugs and illegal substances affects the bottom line of US employers to the tune of $193 billion dollars annually. The majority of people affected by addiction are employed full time and Massachusetts officials are warning that the epidemic has not yet crested. All of us, including the business sector, have important roles to play in addressing it.

Please consider sending a representative from your organization to this morning program. We need to begin to turn the tide on this crisis and know that employers, with your broad reach, can play a pivotal role.

(Program on reverse)
7:30 am: REGISTRATION & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:00 am: WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND TODAY’S AGENDA

8:10 am: KEYNOTE: Kathryn Power, Regional Administrator for Region I Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

8:30 am: THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC AND BUSINESSES – OVERVIEW
PRESENTER: Christie Hager, Senior VP, Beacon Health Options
- Nature and scope of opioid addiction
- What’s different about the current epidemic in MA and the Northeast?
- Pain management
- Why is the opioid epidemic everyone’s issue?
- Impact on your workforce, costs

8:45 am: TREATMENT, RECOVERY and PREVENTION
MODERATOR: Michael Standing, President & CEO, A.I.M. Mutual Insurance Companies
PANEL: Christie Hager, Senior VP, Beacon Health Options
Ray Tamasi, CEO, Gosnold on Cape Cod
Paul Williams, Drug-Free Communities Program Coordinator, Town of Weymouth
Michael Lewis, Owner, Seafood Sam’s Restaurants, Cape Cod
- Opioid addiction: treatment as a chronic illness
- Evaluating benefit and pharmacy programs re medication-assisted treatment (MAT)
- How is Beacon Health Options addressing the opioid addiction crisis?
- How are Treatment Centers like Gosnold on Cape Cod addressing the opioid addiction crisis?
- What is the role of multi-sector, local efforts like Drug-Free Community programs?

9:45 am: BREAK

10:00 am: MANAGING AND SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES WHILE KEEPING THE WORKPLACE SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE
MODERATOR: Tracy Burns, CEO, Northeast Human Resources Association
PANEL: Kathy Carlton, VP, Beacon Health Options
Dick Bond, Director of EAP/Optum Specialty Network
Kathleen Greer, Founder and Chairman, KGA, Inc.
Heather Hardy, Wellness Specialist & Health Coach, Kronos Inc.
- How to communicate with an employee who may have substance use issues
- EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS: Awareness, Education, Utilization, Affordability

11:00 am: LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS: PROTECTING THE EMPLOYER AND THE EMPLOYEE
PRESENTERS: Valerie Samuels, Posternak, Blankstein & Lund, LLP
Ellen Messing, Messing, Rudavsky & Weliky, P.C.
- Compliance with federal and state disability and anti-discrimination laws
- Avoiding liabilities
- Steps to take regarding substance issues and related performance issues
- Different needs of small businesses and large corporations

11:45 am: CLOSING / FURTHER RESOURCES

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