

Pennsylvania's Construction Employers Opioid Awareness Toolkit



Construction Opioid Awareness Week

July 26 – 30, 2021

Construction Employers – Take the Pledge!

Pennsylvania’s Construction Employers Opioid Awareness Toolkit

The creation of this resource is not possible without the following people. In 2017, the Keystone Contractors Association established a goal of educating construction professionals in the area of pain medication use/abuse. Not knowing where to start on this journey to try and make a difference in the battle against opioids, the KCA turned to its network and was connected to some of the brightest and best safety-first professionals who want to make a difference. You may have read that opioid-caused deaths dropped last year and yes, stats in this area are improving, but the following will not stop until we get the number to zero. These individuals provide a wealth of knowledge in a wide variety of topics that go way beyond this resource. Each one is inspiring:

Howard Bernstein
Penn Installations

Rachael Cooper
National Safety Council

Eileen Grenell
Center for Youth & Community Development

Carl Heinlein
American Contractors Insurance Group

Bob McCall
Master Builders’ Association

David Miorelli
Joseph Miorelli & Company

Jason Ortitay
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Greg Quandel
Quandel Construction Group

Jon O’Brien
Publisher, Pennsylvania’s Construction Employers Opioid Awareness Toolkit
Keystone Contractors Association

A very special thanks to the National Safety Council for your leadership on the opioid issue and your partnership with the KCA and many organizations across the country: www.NSC.org.

NOTE: Cover photograph is from CPWR The Center For Construction Research & Training: www.cpwr.com, another excellent resource for construction safety.

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**Dear Construction Employer,
Will you take the Pledge?**

#PAOpioidPledge

Pennsylvania is battling a drug crisis of epic proportions and the construction industry has been one of the top industry sectors hurt by addiction. The Keystone Contractors Association would like to focus on making a difference in the community. We would like to hear stories of people and companies who are doing great work to help rise above the crisis. The opioid crisis is affecting all of us, in one way or another. We are a community, and together we can work to end this crisis.

We encourage construction employers to take a moment to think about how you can help our communities. Simply take a picture or video with your activities of your pledge in action and share it on your social media platforms using the hashtag #PAOpioidPledge and please feel free to send them to the KCA too. Challenge your employees and personal network to also take a pledge to raise awareness on opioids so we can help in this battle. Construction professionals are leaders and their leadership can help tremendously when they assume the role of community ambassadors.

Are you wondering what you can do? Check out the following pages for ideas and resources that can help you and your company raise awareness in the opioid crisis.

Take the pledge today!

#PAOpioidPledge

Opioid Resolution

Due to the severity of the opioid epidemic, many companies, organizations, individuals, etc. created a formal, published plan to draw attention to the crisis and to show their involvement and dedication to helping. A resolution is a great way to spell out the actions that will be taken to address the epidemic.

In Pennsylvania, we are fortunate to have some government entities take a proactive approach. There have been opioid resolutions produced by Governor Tom Wolf, the State Senate, House of Representatives, City of Harrisburg, Adams County, etc. to name a few.

“As you know, the construction industry, which involves physically demanding labor and employs an older workforce, is particularly hard-hit by issues related to opioid and prescription drug abuse. To combat this, many construction employer organizations and labor groups united to provide educational resources, promote awareness of the problem, and potential solutions.”

*Representative Jason Ortity, 2019 Resolution
Prime Sponsor*

The following organizations united to work with the Pennsylvania General Assembly to introduce a resolution:

Architectural Glass & Metal Association

General Building Contractors Association

Ironworkers Employers Association of Western Pennsylvania

Keystone Contractors Association

Keystone Mountain Lakes Regional Council of Carpenters

Laborers International Union of North America Mid-Atlantic Region

Master Builders’ Association of Western Pennsylvania

Mechanical Contractors Association of America Pennsylvania Chapters

National Electrical Contractors Western Pennsylvania Chapter

National Utility Contractors Association Pennsylvania Chapter

Pennsylvania Builders Exchange

Pennsylvania Building & Construction Trades Council

Sheet Metal & Air Conditioning Contractors’ Association PA Chapter

A company or organization can release its own resolution to spell out how they plan address the issue. Your created document can be shared with employees, clients and industry partners, and posted on its website – and, as is the case with a New Year’s Resolution, if it’s written down your chances of fulfilling it are improved. The following can be considered if your company wants to produce a resolution.

[INSERT ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD]

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING
OPIOID AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

WHEREAS the opioid epidemic, overdose deaths, and substance misuse pose a threat to the life, health, and well-being of Pennsylvania residents;

WHEREAS the Pennsylvania Governor has declared the epidemic of heroin and opioid addiction to be a Statewide disaster emergency;

WHEREAS construction is physically demanding and has a much higher injury rate than other industries, making it vulnerable to the opioid epidemic;

WHEREAS the opioid epidemic has imposed significant and continuing costs on our healthcare, criminal justice, and social service systems;

WHEREAS the opioid epidemic has imposed major costs on private employers and the economy as a whole through excess sick days, disability claims, diminished productivity, and lost productivity due to incarceration and premature death;

WHEREAS the opioid epidemic, overdose deaths, and substance misuse cause pain, suffering, and loss to individuals, families, and communities that can never be measured;

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that (Construction Company) will address the opioid epidemic by:

- ✓ Recognizing the last full week of July as Construction Opioid Awareness Week;
- ✓ Promoting awareness of the dangers of opioid and prescription drug abuse through education and discussions;
- ✓ Encouraging employees to dispose of leftover medications and to secure needed medications that remain in the home;
- ✓ Encouraging our employees to be community champions by talking to their children, families, and friends about risks related to drug misuse.

Signed

The Employer's Message to the Employees

A message from leadership to the employees can be a very effective route to illustrate the commitment to raise the awareness of the opioid epidemic. The company's top executive is an excellent choice to send the message, which lets the employees know that this is an important issue and the well-being of the employees is important to the company.

A couple points to consider in the Executive's communication:

- Our company supports the Construction Opioid Awareness Week, held July 27-31, 2020.
- Our goal for supporting this initiative is to raise awareness, provide resources and reduce the stigma involved with opioid use. We feel strongly that raising the awareness can prevent unintentional overdoses.
- This initiative allows the opportunity for employers to have conversations with their employees about opioid addiction, use and overdose prevention. This can be a powerful communication, letting the employees know they are cared for.
- (List any specific events held during the week, for example) During the Construction Opioid Awareness Week we will hold a company-wide stand-down on Monday, July 27, 9:00 AM, to discuss a Safety Toolbox Talk on Opioid Deaths in Construction.
- Opioid – Warn Me stickers
 - If your company offered its workers these stickers last year as part of our first awareness raising campaign, remind them of that and see if anyone needs stickers for their medical cards.
 - If your company did not offer its workers these stickers last year, please feel free to make that offer this year. If you need replenished you can either contact the KCA or visit: <https://safety.nsc.org/stop-everyday-killers-supplies>.
 - As a reminder these "Opioid – Warn Me" stickers are to be placed on medical and prescription cards to let the medical professional know that the patient wants to discuss the risks of a prescribed opioid and whether safer alternatives exist.
- Encourage your employees to be community champions on the opioid epidemic and carry the message to their family, friends and neighbors.
- Remind your employees that your door is always open and that the safety and well-being of all employees is number one priority.

NOTE: Participation in the Construction Opioid Awareness Week is not limited to the construction industry. We encourage all companies to participate and talk to your employees about this important issue.

Toolbox Talks

Worker safety is of the utmost importance to construction companies. Continual safety messaging, meetings, and trainings are great ways to build a strong safety culture, which demonstrates a company's commitment to the worker's health and well-being. Holding a regularly scheduled safety meeting can be effective for getting workers to not take safety for granted and it's an excellent way to prepare workers for project conditions. At the Keystone Contractors Association, we recommend safety toolbox talks happen at least once a week. *

Advice for effective safety toolbox talks:

- Keep it Brief – Five to fifteen minutes is a suitable time to deliver a message and not lose the attention of the audience.
- Stay Focused – Stay on point to effectively deliver your message.
- Be Relevant – Discuss topics that can be helpful to the workers.
- Seek Engagement – Get the workers to prove they are listening by getting them involved (i.e. have them provide examples of topic discussed, allow for questions to be asked).
- Get Total Buy In – Teamwork improves safety and everyone should be on alert. Inspect PPE every time and keep an eye out for everyone.

For the 2019 Construction Opioid Awareness Week, we recommend construction companies conduct at least one safety toolbox on the topic during the week. We've prepared five safety toolbox talks on this topic and companies can either conduct a safety talk everyday of the week or as many as works best for your company. If conducting one, feel free to select the best one for your company. The following is a recommendation if conducting one each day of the week:

Monday, July 26 – [Opioids Death in Construction](#)

Tuesday, July 27 – [Discussing Prescription Opioid Painkillers with Your Doctor](#)

Wednesday, July 28 – [Employee Assistance Program](#)

Thursday, July 29 – [Understanding Opioid Pain Medication/ Know the Risks](#)

Friday, July 30 – [Common Risks at Work Due to Opioid Painkiller Use](#)

* The Keystone Contractors Association sends a weekly Safety Toolbox Talk email every Monday morning. To be added to the distribution list, please contact the KCA (717-731-6272 or SethKohr@KeystoneContractors.com).

Construction Opioid Awareness Information

Drug Take-Back

The Keystone Contractors Association is focused on the health and safety well-being of construction workers and we want to assist them by encouraging proper disposal of unused prescription medications. Many young people who misuse prescription drugs take them from medicine cabinets. Keeping unused opioids or other common drugs of misuse in a medicine cabinet is no longer safe or responsible.

To Find a Drug Take-Back Location visit:

<https://apps.ddap.pa.gov/GetHelpNow/PillDrop.aspx>

How to prepare items for disposal:

- All prescribed medications to be disposed of should be contained inside their original bottle or placed inside a small sealed container or zip-lock bag.
- Personal information should be removed or covered by permanent marker.

A message from the Pennsylvania Department of Drug & Alcohol Programs:

REMEMBER Lock Up – Don't Share – Safely Dispose

1. Lock up all of your medications.
2. Don't share your medications with anyone or take someone else's medications.
3. Safely dispose of unused or unwanted medications. When you pick up a prescription, ask your pharmacist for drug disposal pouches or find a drug take-back box.



Please join us the last full week of July as we celebrate:

Construction Opioid Awareness Week

For more information visit: <https://KeystoneContractors.com/Opioid-Awareness>

Resources

- Treatment Locator: [Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#).
- National Helpline: [SAMHSA's National Helpline](#) is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.
- [Naloxone/Narcan](#): Pennsylvania has a standing order for Naloxone, which is used for opioid or heroin overdose reversal.
- [Prescription Drug Employer Kit](#) for employers
- [Substance Use Cost Calculator](#) provides information on the cost to a business of substance use in their workplace.
- [Order Free Resources to Reduce Opioid Risk](#) free supplies to safely and securely dispose of prescription drugs and "Opioid: Warn Me" labels to prompt a conversation with your medical provider.
- [Stop Everyday Killers](#) promotes awareness and features stories from people who lost someone to the opioid epidemic.
- [Prescription Drug Abuse Epidemic: Painkillers Driving Addiction, Overdose](#) provides information on the epidemic.
- [Unused Medication Disposal Resources](#) provides information on what you can do to fight the epidemic.
- [Prescription Drug Abuse: For Providers](#) provides information for health care providers.
- [Annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Days](#): The last Saturdays of April and October are the dates for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

To make suggestions of resources to be added for employers to consider, please contact the KCA (717-731-6272 or Jon@KeystoneContractors.com).