

Leading Healthcare Survey Reveals Substance Use Drives Costly Disability Claims

Substance use data gathered in Benefits Canada's survey for first time

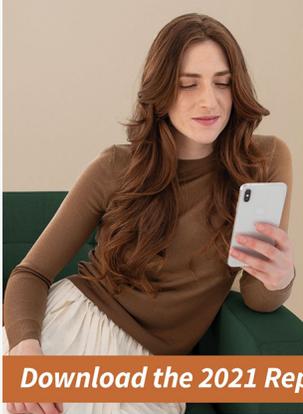
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EINPresswire.com/ -- New data from Benefits Canada's leading healthcare survey shows hidden substance use disorders are increasing employer healthcare claims. ALAViDA, a leading virtual provider of evidence-based substance use treatment and member of the LifeSpeak Inc. (TSX: LSPK) family of companies, sponsored the survey, which for the first time focused attention on substance use.

The national survey of 1,000 primary holders of group benefits conducted by Ipsos Reid found 15 per cent of respondents reported their alcohol use was up. For health care workers and first responders, almost 20 per cent reported increased alcohol use over the past year. The 2021 Benefits Canada Health Survey Advisory Board expects alcohol use was underreported in the survey, and that these figures are likely higher.

The survey found mental health now tops its list of chronic conditions. Among all respondents, 36 per cent reported increased sadness, anxiety or depression and that number rose to 45 per cent among women. The isolation of work-from-home may have contributed to mental health concerns.

"Evidence-based mental health training is vital to identify and eliminate stereotypes, especially surrounding substance use, which represents over 30 per cent of mental health issues, according to the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). It should be a top priority for plan sponsors in the post-COVID workplace," says Elliot Stone, President of ALAViDA, a LifeSpeak company. "Structural stigma is baked into the workplace, and it prevents people from accessing the help they need pre-disability. If we learn to communicate with empathy and encouragement, rather than with judgement while overburdening those seeking treatment, we



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ALAViDA, a LifeSpeak company



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will see better outcomes.”

The survey also found that the acceptance of virtual care has accelerated. Digital services like ALAViDA are changing the treatment landscape by providing employers with an opportunity to expand access to evidence-based care that increases treatment success while driving down costs. An analysis of the effectiveness of the ALAViDA platform conducted by the Digital Health Circle, a BC-based not for profit that partners with more than 250 organizations across Canada, found that 86 per cent of clients reduced consumption and 79 percent increased control over their use.

“Substance use has always been costly for employers, but is hidden in the workplace—and the pandemic has only exacerbated the issue,” says ALAViDA’s Stone. “Increased reliance on substances as a coping strategy in these stressful times will have significant impacts on employees and their families. Mental health and addiction experts are predicting that the effects of the pandemic will be long-lasting, and research tells us questions about substance use were already not asked often enough, creating a dearth of data. We need to know the extent of the problem so we can provide solutions.”

[Read the full report here.](#)

About ALAViDA:

ALAViDA, part of the LifeSpeak Inc. (TSX: LSPK) family of companies, is a leading virtual care provider focused on the science of substance use management. It is a one-stop-shop approach for all levels of substance use disorder – alcohol and drugs – mild, moderate and severe. ALAViDA connects patients with behavioural coaches, therapists and physicians who work as a team to deliver personalized care right to their smartphones. ALAViDA is an employee benefit with varying plans and personalized therapeutic programs, which has proven to minimize time out of the workplace. Traditional rehab often costs \$30,000 or more a month. ALAViDA’s program is a mere fraction of that.

To learn more visit [ALAViDA.co](https://alavida.co)

For information on corporate programs or to establish a referral relationship contact solutions@alavida.co

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