



**Commonwealth of Kentucky
Cabinet for Health and Family Services**

Matthew G. Bevin, Governor
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Symposium to Highlight Statewide Initiatives Linking
Employment and Recovery**

LEXINGTON, KY (Nov. 25, 2019) - Kentucky's health policy and business leaders are bringing together treatment providers and community organizations for an employment symposium on Tuesday, December 3 at the Lyric Theater.

The Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) is coordinating the event with support from the Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center and the Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment (SITE). This symposium will focus on training and employment opportunities for those in recovery from a substance use disorder.

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about programs within their communities, network with others at the symposium, and become more involved with Kentucky's initiatives.

ODCP Executive Director Van Ingram will provide an overview of Kentucky's opioid response and highlight key successes, and various business, community, and state leaders will provide informational "lightning round" presentations.

“Employment not only provides stable income - but also promotes social inclusion and a sense of purpose, and each supports long-term recovery,” Ingram said. “This symposium will provide an opportunity for treatment and community organizations to better understand the programs and resources available to support both employers and employees impacted by substance use,” he added. “We hope to raise awareness of the work being done – and the opportunities to help more Kentuckians.”

Shannon Bresaw, Director for the New Hampshire Governor's Recovery Friendly Workplace Program, will provide the day's keynote address, highlighting the success of New Hampshire's program and strategies for engaging employers.

Lunch will be catered by the Lexington-based restaurant DV8, which hires and trains people in early recovery from substance use disorder.

Treatment providers, community-based organizations, and advocacy groups interested in learning more about opioid response efforts to support employment and address barriers to success are encouraged to attend.

Interested parties can register for the event here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/employmentsymposium>

"SITE was created to help businesses support their employees, while also retaining talent and addressing workplace issues created by substance use disorder," said Beth Kuhn, senior policy advisor for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

“By engaging the business community in the state's opioid response efforts, we are proactively addressing barriers that stand in the way of both successful recruitment of talent and of employee success and recovery,” she added. “We hope Kentucky treatment providers and community groups will take advantage of the opportunity provided by the upcoming symposium and will join us to learn more about the impact of substance use and how employment-related programs can play a role in Kentucky's opioid response.”

SITE recognizes that recovery from substance use disorder is a strength. By being willing to hire and work intentionally with people in recovery, businesses can grow their talent pipelines and contribute to the improved health and wellbeing of their communities.

The program aims to help individuals find suitable employment that matches their interests and skill set; helps employers better understand substance use and connects them with resources within their communities to assist with hiring, retaining, and supporting employees; and can assist employers in developing an Employer Resource Network, which includes the support of an on-site success coach to work directly with staff to overcome workplace or personal challenges that stand in the way of retaining employment.

SITE is a unique collaboration between the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP), the Cabinets for Health and Family Services and Justice and Public Safety, the Kentucky Career Centers, the Department for Workforce Investment, and the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. Funding is provided by the Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) and ODCP.

“KORE aims to strengthen Kentucky’s system of care, by increasing access to high quality prevention, treatment, and recovery support services in communities throughout the Commonwealth,” said Dr. Brittney Allen, Deputy Project Director for KORE and the state’s opioid coordinator. “By working with our state’s employers, we are able to further enhance strategies to both prevent substance use and ensure that individuals have access to quality treatment through employer health plans. We are also able to help ensure more people in recovery can find and retain meaningful employment that supports their long-term recovery.”

In addition to the statewide employment symposium on Dec. 3, employers and representatives from the business community can participate in an upcoming Regional Employer Technical Assistance Workshop. These workshops are designed to help employers understand the basics of substance use disorder and addiction, the impact of substance use on their workforce, and to provide recommendations and tools for employers to support their employees in recovery from or impacted by substance use disorder.

Suggested attendees for the Regional Employer Technical Assistance Workshops include business executive and human resource leadership. These workshops are FREE to attend. Dates and locations include:

- **Dec. 10, 2019**, Lyric Theatre & Cultural Arts Center, 300 E 3rd Street, Lexington, KY
- **Dec. 11, 2019**, Gateway Community and Technical College, 500 Technology Way, Florence, KY

HOW TO FIND TREATMENT

Kentucky's treatment locator, **findhelpnowky.org**, helps locate a treatment provider accepting clients immediately. Individuals seeking treatment for themselves or others – as well as family members who have questions or are in need of support – can call 1-833-8KY-HELP (1-833-859-4357) toll-free or text HOPE to 96714 and speak with a specialist about available treatment services most relevant to their needs. All calls are confidential.

Additional information is available at <http://chfs.ky.gov/>.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.