

Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative

supportive



Recognizing the need to expand and adapt to new challenges that arose from the impacts of Covid-19, employers have been expressing a growing awareness of the importance of supporting their employees' mental health. This support is multi-layered and complex, as has been illuminated by the expert speakers in the Chamber's mental health series "Healthy Communities for Healthy Businesses." Those suffering from co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders, or helping family members through those challenges, were faced with additional burdens of isolation, anxiety and depression during the pandemic. Although mental health became a more pressing priority, the best employers foster a culture that minds the mental well-being of its employees in all times.

In support of mental health in our business community, the Chamber is proud to have recently earned its designation as a Recovery-Friendly Workplace. The Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) Initiative was founded in 2018 by Governor Chris Sununu to promote the health, safety and wellness of NH employees, with Granite United Way partnering with the State of New Hampshire to administer the initiative. Overall, RFW empowers workplaces to provide support and remove barriers for

those impacted by substance use disorder. Support is also provided for family members and loved ones. To date, over 285 businesses throughout NH are participating in this initiative across a diverse array of sectors including manufacturing, hospitality, construction, non-profits and more. Individuals have engaged in RFW activities over 13,000 times, with employees completing trainings over 3,000 times.

"As a result of the RFW initiative, many Granite State Businesses have taken steps to change their workplace policies or create an environment supportive of alcohol and other drug use prevention, treatment and recovery," said Shannon Bresaw, Program Director of RFW and Vice President of Public Health for Granite United Way.

Although hiring people in recovery is not a requirement of a recovery-friendly workplace, sound employment can serve as one of the several key pillars contributing to ability to sustain recovery and lead a productive, healthy and fulfilled life. Employment provides community, a sense of purpose, accountability and structure, which can be critical aspects of a person's journey. RFW provides no cost staff trainings, services and education to help create a safe and compassionate

environment for employees.

Stigmatization is minimized; access to resources and help are maximized. The RFW has forged and leveraged wonderful community partnerships to strengthen its impact. The Chamber is a great example of this type of collaboration. Cross-promotion of the Chamber's "Healthy Communities for Healthy Businesses" CEO Roundtable helped increase our joint network, dispel common misinformation about the RFW initiative, and further the missions of both the Chamber and RFW.

"The Chamber's experience with the RFW team has been eye-opening and has led our team to engage in some very meaningful conversations," said Heather McGrail, GMC Director of Membership and Community Partnerships. "RFW participation has taught us how to more effectively understand and compassionately communicate about substance abuse challenges and overall mental health in the workplace. We highly encourage Chamber members to consider RFW designation to support the wellness of our community."

RFW will inspire other businesses and organizations to create workplaces and communities that are safer, non-judgmental and inclusive for all.

 To learn more, visit:
RecoveryFriendlyWorkplace.com/join-us

UP NEXT

what you need to know this season



Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative

Pictured Left to Right: Tracey Pelton, PROCON Executive Director of Business Development and Marketing; Karen Morton-Clark, NH Recovery Friendly Workplace Advisor; Sally Stebbins, PROCON Owner; Governor Chris Sununu; Amy Mayo, PROCON Human Resources Manager; John Stebbins, PROCON Managing Director; Jen Stebbins Thomas, PROCON Managing Director; Eliza Zarka, Addiction & Behavioral Health Coordinator at Office of Governor Christopher T. Sununu.

Plus, Inside:
GMC Staff Update
Community Snapshots
Nominate a Citizen of the Year