

Bridget Blinn-Spears Offers Insight into Opioid Crisis in Construction Industry

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Bridget Blinn-Spears, a Member with Nexsen Pruet's employment and labor law group, recently spoke to WACH Fox-57 for their segment "More construction workers struggling with opioid addiction, says legal consultant."

Bridget shares her comprehensive knowledge of the impact of the opioid epidemic on construction workers, providing insight on the relationship between the pandemic, the industry, and opioid addictions, as well as offering possible solutions for construction employers.

Excerpt

COLUMBIA, SC (WACH) -- A legal consultant is shedding a light on the debilitating impact of the opioid epidemic on construction workers – even going as far as to write a column addressing it.

Opioid addiction causes a very big problem in the industry, as it is difficult to replace construction workers. It's one industry that continues to boom as others sink.

"Construction is an industry that has continued to thrive through the pandemic, but it also means that people really want to keep these jobs," said Bridget Blinn-Spears. She is a partner with Nexsen Pruet and works with construction companies across the Midlands. She says she's seeing more people fall into the trap of opioid addiction.

"Construction workers have a uniquely physically hard job. So, their bodies are impacted by the physical manual labor that they engage in," said Blinn-Spears. "Because of those risk factors related to the industry, people are prescribed medication appropriately in connection with injuries or repetitive use injuries and those sorts of things."

Blinn-Spears also says because of the pandemic – there can be fewer supervisors at construction sites -- leading to higher numbers of employees that may be addicted to drugs going undetected.

It's a situation that creates dangers for all involved. That's why Nexsen Pruet is working with construction leaders on new guidelines.

“One is to make sure that people have good policies in place and doing compliant drug testing,” said Blinn-Spears. That measure is in addition to working with employers to recognize the signs of abuse, and to create addiction recovery programs.

“Hopefully we can get to early intervention so that people can receive treatment. And then continue to stay in the workforce,” Blinn-Spears added.

It is an approach that she believes will reduce the risk of injuries and death significantly.

Watch or read the full piece here.

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