

## Illness in the Workplace

Stress affects people of all ages, incomes, and careers. All levels of stress can have a major impact on the workplace. Your organization can suffer if proactive measures are not taken and stress levels reach a high level. Consequences can include lower productivity, increased health care costs and even violence in the workplace.

According to the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, health care expenditures are nearly 50% greater for workers who report a high level of work related stress. The Encyclopedia of Occupational Safety and Health notes the following ailments as job stress related difficulties:

- **Cardiovascular Disease**-Many studies suggest that psychologically demanding jobs that allow workers little control over the work process increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.
- **Musculoskeletal Disorders**-On the basis of research by NIOSH and many other organizations, it is widely believed that job stress increases the risk for the development of back and musculoskeletal disorders.
- **Psychological Disorders**-Several studies suggest that differences in rates of mental health problems (such as depression and anxiety) for various occupations are due partly to differences in job stress levels.
- **Workplace Injury**-Although more study is needed, there is a growing concern that stressful working conditions interfere with safe work practices and set the stage for injuries at work.
- **Suicide, Cancer, Ulcers, and Impaired Immune Function**-Some studies suggest a relationship between stressful working conditions and these health problems.

As the cost of health care rises, many people are looking for ways to help control or prevent chronic health conditions. Assisting workers in managing their stress levels can be a step in the right direction. The dedicated risk management team at First Sun EAP is available to assist workers with stress related issues. Whether someone needs individual counseling for stress related difficulties, a supervisor needs a consultation about stress within a department, the department needs stress management training, or HR is requesting a consultation about the work environment as a whole, First Sun EAP is here to help you and your staff be better at work.

Give us a call toll free, **800-968-8143** or in Greater Columbia, **803-376-2668**.

For more information on this topic as well as other risk management situations, please see our website at: [www.firstsuneap.com](http://www.firstsuneap.com).