

MEDIA RELEASE

12 February 2008

Workshop educates Newcastle and Hunter businesses about drug use in the workplace

Drug and alcohol testing and screening specialist Frontline Diagnostics will hold a workshop on Tuesday, 4 March in Newcastle to educate the region's employers and managers about the prevalence and impact of drugs at work and how to develop policies to ensure a drug-safe workplace.

The morning Drug-Safe workshop, designed for business owners and managers as well as Occupational Health & Safety managers, will be held at the Industry Development Centre at Callaghan.

The workshop will feature a number of speakers including Frontline Diagnostics Managing Director Michael White, legal expert Steven Gavagna from Goodman Law and toxicologist from Inverness Medical, Andrew Leibie (a specialist in identifying the effects of drugs in the body).

Michael White established Frontline Diagnostics in 1999 to provide Australian industry with a complete solution for the detection, management and control of alcohol and other drugs in the workplace.

"Most managers are oblivious to drug use and drug impairment at work. It's not easy to monitor the presence of drugs at work, yet 70 per cent of drug users in Australia are employed. Organisations need to remember that a reputation for drug use will kill a business just as fast as it will kill a drug user," White said.

"The upcoming workshop will focus on a number of areas including how to develop and implement a drug and alcohol policy; training managers and teaching employees about company policy; differences between the types of drug testing available; how Frontline Diagnostics can screen your entire workplace for the presence of drugs and finally, how to structure an effective random drug testing program for employees," he said.

White said Frontline Diagnostics got astounding results when establishing a drug screening program with a series of mines in the Hunter region and Newcastle.

"We ran 7,000 tests in a year and at the beginning, 17 per cent of the mines staff tested positive to our drug and alcohol screening. By the end of the 12 months, only 1.8 per cent tested positive. This is a huge decrease," he said.

Michael White has experienced first-hand how drug use can be overlooked in the workplace and the damaging consequences.

“Prior to setting up Frontline Diagnostics I worked with a business partner in pharmaceutical promotions for 15 years. We had a great working relationship and I was unaware that he was a heroin addict until he overdosed and passed away after 12 years of using the drug,” White said.

“It was then that I decided I wanted to work towards creating a drug-safe Australia. Using my background in pharmaceuticals, I started Frontline Diagnostics to provide a testing and screening service as well as assistance in policy development for companies to lessen the impact of drug and alcohol use in the workplace,” he added.

The Drug-Safe workshop will be held on Tuesday, 4 March at the Industry Development Centre on University Drive, Callaghan, from 7:30 to 11 am and costs \$65 (breakfast included). Attendees have until Friday, 29 February to register by visiting www.frontlinediagnostics.com.au.

The series of workshops will also be held in Sydney, Canberra, Wollongong, Brisbane and Melbourne throughout 2008.

Frontline Diagnostics services include complete drug screening and testing with results analysis and comprehensive reporting; policy development support for regulating alcohol and other drugs at the workplace; education workshops and training; purpose-built mobile clinics plus referral to accredited employee assistance providers.

Frontline Diagnostics is also a founding member of the Drug-Safe Australia Foundation.

To register to the workshops or for more information about Frontline Diagnostics, visit www.frontlinediagnostics.com.au or call 1800 888 852.

Released for Frontline Diagnostics by Dennis Rutzou Public Relations (www.drpr.com.au)

For further information please call Kim Larochelle or Nicola Rutzou on (02) 9413 4244.