Over the last two decades, the US has experienced a dramatic increase in both drug-related deaths and suicide, commonly known as deaths of despair. There are many factors that have contributed to this increase, including an epidemic of prescription drug overdoses and increasing financial instability, all of which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Deaths of despair have impacted all sectors of our society, but have been shown to be more prominent in certain worker populations. For example, the construction industry has a drug overdose rate that is 6-7 times higher and a suicide rate that is four times higher than the national average.

This course is designed for safety professionals interested in understanding the societal issues and psychosocial factors that contribute to deaths of despair and in developing strategies for prevention in the workplace, including best practices for open communication about mental health and addiction, and removing barriers to treatment.

Course Director Gary Franklin, MD, MPH has served as the Medical Director of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) from 1988 to the present. Dr. Franklin has conducted several studies related to opioid prescribing practices, has translated this research directly back into state health care policy, and is leading a statewide effort to educate physicians about best practice use of opioids for chronic non-cancer pain. He will be joined by experts from across the country who will discuss the epidemiology of deaths of despair, addiction treatment and recovery, and workplace suicide prevention efforts.

During this course experts will cover:

- Recognizing the risk factors associated with deaths of despair.
- Latest research on the prevalence of deaths of despair.
- Strategies for recognizing when workers may be struggling with mental illness or drug misuse.
- Communication skills useful in preventing deaths of despair in the workplace.

REGISTRATION & COURSE INFO

September 28, 2021, 8:30am-3:00pm
Virtual Classroom, 6.0 Contact Hours, 0.6 CEUs

Registration: $175

Registration for this training is through the Washington State Governor’s Industrial Safety and Health Conference website. Please visit gishab.org to register.

CONTACT US

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Course Director

**Course Director Gary Franklin, MD, MPH**
Medical Director, Washington State Department of Labor & Industries
Research Professor, Department of Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences and Department of Medicine (Neurology), and Adjunct Research Professor, Department of Health Systems and Population Health, University of Washington

Dr. Franklin has served as the Medical Director of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) from 1988 to the present, and has more than a 25-year history of developing and administering workers’ compensation health care policy and conducting outcomes research.

Dr. Franklin is also Director of the Occupational Epidemiology and Health Outcomes Program at the UW, which is the most productive program of its kind in the U.S. This program houses and facilitates primary research as well as the secondary use of workers’ compensation data in order to improve medical care and reduce the disability related to occupational injuries and illnesses. Because of his unique dual directorship roles, he is in a unique position to conduct meaningful policy-relevant health services research, and provide leadership in this area. Dr. Franklin has conducted several studies related to opioid prescribing practices, has translated this research directly back into state health care policy, and is leading a statewide effort to educate physicians about best practice use of opioids for chronic non-cancer pain.

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**Featured Speakers**

**Caleb Banta-Green, PhD, MPH, MSW**
Principal Research Scientist, Addictions, Drug & Alcohol Institute, School of Medicine & Affiliate Professor, Health Systems and Population Health, School of Public Health, University of Washington

**Doug Buman**
Tri-Fund Field Coordinator, Laborers’ International Union of North America; Active Emeritus Board Member - Washington State Governor's Industrial Safety & Health Advisory Board

**Jennifer Dimoff, PhD, MS**
Assistant Professor, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa

**Michele Gerber, PhD**
Chair, Board of Directors, President, Benton Franklin Recovery Coalition

**Devan Hawkins, ScD, MS**
Instructor of Public Health, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS) University

**Mandi Kime, MS-SHM**
Director of Safety, American General Contractors of Washington

**Jonathan D. Rosen, MS, CIH, FAIHA**
Industrial Hygiene Consultant, National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety & Health Training

**Kyle F. Zimmer, Jr., LAP-C**
Director, Health & Safety and Member Assistance Program, International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE)
Occupational Deaths of Despair: Scope of the Problem and Strategies for Prevention

Welcome and Introduction – Nancy Simcox, MS and Gary Franklin, MD, MPH, Course Director

Course Agenda - September 28, 2021

8:30-8:35am  Welcome and Introduction – Nancy Simcox, MS and Gary Franklin, MD, MPH, Course Director

The Opioid Epidemic

9:20-10:05  The Role of Work in Deaths of Despair – Devan Hawkins, ScD, MS
10:05-10:15  Break
10:15-11:00  The Opioid Epidemic: Opioid Trends and Treating Use Disorder – Caleb Banta-Green, PhD, MPH, MSW
11:00-11:30  Opioid Recovery: The Family Perspective – Michelle Gerber, PhD
11:30-12:00pm  Opioids and the Workplace: Prevention and Response – Jonathan Rosen, MS, CIH, FAIHA

- 30 minute lunch break

Work-Related Suicide

12:30-1:00  Suicide in the Workplace – Jonathan Rosen, MS, CIH, FAIHA
1:00-1:20  Suicide Prevention Strategies for Construction – Mandi Kime, MS-SHM
1:20-1:40  Mental Health and Role of Supervisors in Suicide Prevention – Jennifer Dimoff, PhD, MS
1:40-1:50  Break
1:50-2:10  A Union’s Response to Engaging Members in Suicide Prevention – Doug Buman
2:10-2:30  Suicide Prevention - Peer to Peer Member Assistance Program – Kyle Zimmer, LAP-C
2:30-2:50  Panel on Work-related Suicide Prevention – Jonathan Rosen, MS, CIH, FAIHA, Panel Facilitator
2:50-3:00  Wrap-up – Gary Franklin, MD, MPH and Jonathan Rosen, MS, CIH, FAIHA