



Press Release

The Rise of Synthetic Opioids Could Explain Part of the Missing Workforce

PAULINA ENCK | DECEMBER 7, 2022

In new research, Labor Policy Analyst Isabella Hindley considers the link between the rise in synthetic opioid use and the 6.3 million missing from the U.S. workforce.

Key findings:

- This study estimates that the loss of at least 1.3 million of the 6.3 million missing workers may be attributable to the ongoing opioid epidemic.
- The rise of synthetic opioid use increased overall opioid overdose fatalities by more than 200 percent between 2013 and 2021.
- It also contributes to lower worker productivity, increased worker absenteeism, increased job openings through employee turnover, and a reduced labor supply.
- The loss of more than 1.3 million workers due to opioid use indicates a cumulative loss of 7 billion work hours and \$526.1 billion in reduced real output supply between 2013 and 2021.

[*Read the analysis*](#)