

Statement From

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Alcoholism and its accompanying affect upon family life, the community, the workplace and the individual is a problem of major national concern. It is one which the AFL-CIO has recognized for many years. Our Department of Community Services has been actively engaged in programs involving alcoholism since the AFL and CIO merged in 1955.

On the question of alcohol abuse there should be no room for disagreement on the part of labor or management. From every point of view, in any and all contexts, alcoholism is a tragedy that has no silver lining, no redeeming social value and no apologists, defenders or partisans of any kind. It is a very proper subject as a matter of self interest and mutual interest for unions and employers to work together to help find solutions to this affliction.

The AFL-CIO, therefore, has urged its affiliated unions to negotiate alcohol and drug abuse programs at the bargaining table so as to include this subject in their agreements. Such assistance to American workers addresses the reality of the workplace.

American's trade unions have a fundamental concern with the well being of their members and their families. Moreover, the labor movement has for some time adopted its policies and principles under the doctrine of improving the quality of life for the total community.

We are also concerned about the cost of alcoholism to industry.

More than 75 percent of the nation's alcoholics are employed. A loss of \$19.64 billion in 1975 alone has been attributed to lost production and services through alcohol problems of employees in business, industry, civilians in government and the military. More recent data suggests that this phenomena is worsening and attributable to the severe downturn in the nation's economy.

Upon examining the problem in a broader context the 1975 data shows problem drinking and alcoholism costing the nation \$43 billion. This figure is computed on the basis of lost production, health and medical costs, motor vehicle accidents, violent crimes, fire losses and social responses. Of course, the human cost is immeasurable.

A new phenomenon has occurred in many parts of the country during the last two years. Coincidental with the spread of workers assistance programs is the employment of outside consultants by corporations. Often this leads to challenges against the union's role of effective representation — with all that is implied in that term. We accordingly urge all unions to resist the use of consultants who have no place in the labor-management relationship.

We repeat the theme that unions and management should develop their own alcohol and employee assistance programs together through the collective bargaining agreement.

Relations between the AFL-CIO, through its Department of Community Services and ALMACA have been good during the past year. We would particularly like to express our appreciation to ALMACA President Ed Small, Executive Director Tom Delaney and Labor Committee Chairman Jack Hennessy for their cooperation.

As always, labor will support the worthwhile efforts of the ALMACA organization to promote adequate programs to help control this disease.