

Today's focus on Mental Health highlights the need for an oral fluid option in workplace drug testing.

- ❑ 7% of the population suffers from Shy Bladder Syndrome, medically known as Paruresis¹. For perspective, that percentage equates to 441,000 of the 6.3 million workers who were subject to Department of Transportation testing in 2015 alone.²
- ❑ 1 in 3 people were reported to be unable to provide a urine sample on a doctor's visit.³
- ❑ For many, the idea that being unable to provide a urine sample can cost them their jobs or result in punitive employment action, adds to the stress of the situation and leads to the inability to provide a sample.

What is the impact of these testing failures?

- ❑ Loss of productivity. Time away from the job.
- ❑ Required participation in unneeded counseling programs.
- ❑ Embarrassment.
- ❑ Termination of trained, well evaluated employees. "No hire" of needed staff.
- ❑ Potential exposure of HIPAA protected information. Potential legal challenges.



There is a disconnect between the purpose of drug testing and current methods.

- ❑ The purpose of President Reagan's Executive Order was to ensure a drug-free workplace, not to deny employment for innocent employees who would gladly submit to any testing other than urine.
- ❑ The cumbersome Urine Testing Guidelines have overwhelmed their purpose.
- ❑ There is no mechanism for a subject to select oral fluid in advance.

Benefits of Oral Fluid testing option

- ❑ Oral Fluid testing is 3x more accurate than urine testing at a lower cost.
- ❑ Oral Fluid collection is easily observable, and the sample is much more difficult to alter than a urine one.
- ❑ No one who intends to hide drug use would select the more accurate option.
- ❑ Saliva regenerates every 10 minutes. Oral Fluid testing requires a ten-minute wait period before collection.
- ❑ If selected at the outset, there is no loss of productivity while collectors wait to hydrate and calm shy bladder individuals. There is no need to send "failing" participants through Medical Review.
- ❑ Shy bladder no longer equals refusal or failure.



What next?

- ✓ SAMHSA has already released federally-approved oral fluid testing guidelines.
- ❑ Labs must be certified ASAP to be eligible to use oral fluid testing for federal purposes.
- ❑ Employees MUST be provided the option for upfront selection of the oral fluid option without explanation to remove the need for first "failing" or "refusing" a urine test. This option eliminates any need for employees to disclose HIPAA protected medical information.



¹ <https://paruresis.org/paruresis-facts/>

² <https://bit.ly/3saPb1k>

³ Survey conducted by International Paruresis Association 2020-2021
See the reverse side for real stories from real people negatively affected by today's urine testing requirements.

"I just couldn't pee!" Real stories from real people.

Ashley A., Texas: Upon interviewing and subsequently being offered a position in the pharmacy with Walmart on a Sunday, I was directed to submit a urine sample for a drug test. I was only allowed 24 hours from the end of the interview into the following day to complete said test. However, the testing facility is open only on weekdays, so my timeline was cut much shorter than for someone who interviewed on a weekday. Because I was unable to provide a sample during the time frame, it was ultimately deemed a "refusal" and resulted in me no longer qualifying for the position. With COVID-19, I expected the conditions to be much cleaner, but I was shocked to see toilet seats with no covers, dirty water fountains, and no privacy. All the noise was very distracting and contributed to my inability to provide a sample.

Bill B., Missouri: On April 16, 2021, I submitted to a required drug screening for preemployment with a fiberglass manufacturing company conducted by a local clinic. I was unable to produce a sufficient amount of urine within the allotted three-hour time frame and I was marked as a "refusal," thus eliminating my potential for full-time employment

I had advised the administering nurse that I had a shy bladder based in this difficulty previously. She urged me to drink more water, which only made it painful and more difficult. It was a traumatic, humiliating, and degrading experience. I even expressed to her my extreme anxiety.

I have never been a drug user (not even recreationally) and have an absolutely clean criminal record. I don't even consume alcohol. And now, no job.

John K., New York: For Department of Transportation testing, the shy bladder is reported to an MRO (medical review officer). You must go to a doctor for an excuse for why you couldn't pee. The bad part is they choose the doctor. I'm still worried they might not see paruresis as a viable excuse. I've heard a lot of urologists don't know what it is.

If I can't provide it's a refusal. My job called me yesterday and said I have to sign a last chance agreement, take a 30-day suspension, and get counseling. I'm not on drugs!

These are all true stories from real people who have contacted the International Paruresis Association in search of support. Some content has been edited for space and clarity.

Chris K., California: I am stuck in [local transportation authority] hell. I was fired from my job and have been out of work for 18 months because, I could not produce a urine sample due to shy bladder. However, through a settlement between my union and the [authority] I will be able to return to work with all my benefits and seniority even though the program I must complete requires me to be labeled a substance abuser which is absolutely nuts. I am terrified I won't be able to produce a sample during the drug test after completing the therapist obligations, I'm doing all I can to return to work.

Donald L., California: The more time that passed the more anxious I was getting because I knew that if I can't provide a sample I will be fired. I began to feel an anxiety attack coming on, I started shaking and I could feel my heart pounding. I waited 2 hours and I asked to try again. While I was trying to give my sample the two nurses began gossiping right outside my door and laughing about something. This made me feel incredibly anxious and just like the first time after a minute she began telling me to hurry up and that I only had four minutes.

I went back to the waiting room and at this point, I lost track of time because I was having a full-blown panic attack. My bladder was in pain because I did have to go, but my body physically would not let me go. I asked them if I could provide a blood sample and they said they do not do that but if my employer would let me give a hair sample, they could do it that way. I called [company HR person] and asked if I could provide a hair sample and initially, she said yes but called back and said that I could not. At this point I am fighting back tears. I'm shaking so bad I can barely text my fiancé and I'm a little worried to even drive because of how bad I'm feeling. Even as I type this right now reliving that experience, I'm shaking. At the end of the visit, I told them I physically can't pee, and they told me that they were going to void my visit and that I could leave. I wasn't given anything as far as paperwork or any further instructions. I have always had issues using public restrooms and in the past, it's been hard to provide urine sample. I don't know what will happen.

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