

For Immediate Release
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International Paruresis Association Declares Victory in New US Dept. of Transportation Oral Fluid Drug Testing Guidelines

Catonsville, MD USA (May 11, 2023) — The US Department of Transportation released new rules on May 2, 2023 allowing for the use of oral fluid specimen drug testing for the first time. After a thorough examination, the International Paruresis Association (IPA) is pleased with the recognition the DOT has given shy bladder syndrome and the IPA, as well as the encouragement to employers to provide this alternative.

Steven Soifer, Ph.D., IPA senior consultant and co-founder said: “We’ve been working for the past 27 years for fairness in drug testing. We’re not all the way there yet, but these new rules bring us closer to the finish line.” Soifer added: “We have to be patient since it will be some time before the DOT certifies labs to conduct oral testing, and we remain concerned that employers still have no mandate to allow oral fluid testing. Employers continue to have the option to restrict testing to urine only. This situation needs to be addressed. Only if the employee gets to choose the testing method can each person’s human and constitutional rights be assured.”

Chicago trucker Phil Jones (not his real name) lost his trucking license after 20 years as the result of a failed drug test. The only problem: he wasn’t on drugs. He simply couldn’t provide a urine sample as a result of a “shy bladder.” “I own my own company, so that means I haven’t worked for more than two months. I always took the full three hours allowed before, but this time, I couldn’t go. Now, I’m out of work – and forced to go to a substance abuse program if I want a chance to get it back.” Thousands of others like him now have renewed hope with [the new regulations](#). Added Jones, “It may be too late to help me, but I’m very hopeful that in the near future, others will be spared the embarrassment and lost money that I’ve experienced. It’s long past time to humanize this system.”

Shy Bladder Syndrome, technically known as Paruresis (“par-you-ree-sis”) is a social phobia mentioned in the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition), under the category 300.23 (F40.10). According to studies, an estimated 7% of the US population suffers from this illness. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) determined in 2011 that Paruresis should qualify as a disability under Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAAA) definitions.

Dr. Soifer added: “This ruling represents a significant change in the drug testing landscape and a full acknowledgement that oral fluid testing is a reasonable accommodation for those suffering from our disability. The DOT agrees this alternative is as accurate in identifying drugs as urine testing and that the new oral procedure is much more cost effective overall. We hope that practicality and fairness will win over employers who might hesitate to change their ways. We stand ready to assist any person who continues to be treated unfairly in this respect when an easy solution is fully approved.”

About the IPA: The International Paruresis Association (IPA) is a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It was founded in 1996 to raise public awareness about paruresis, provide education and support, and give out the latest information on recovery options. Most of IPA’s members and leadership are treatment professionals, people suffering from paruresis or recovering from it, and their loved ones. Membership is open to anyone touched by paruresis as well as those with an interest in supporting people with paruresis, advocating for their rights, and advancing scientific knowledge about the disorder.