

**HEALTH-CARE WORKERS
SPEAK OUT ABOUT STRESS,
SUBSTANCE ABUSE, AND
DRUG TESTING**

Sandra C. Lapham, M.D., MPH

Director

**Behavioral Health Research
Center of the Southwest**

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Cost of Substance Abuse to Employers

- Alcoholism accounts for 500 million lost workdays per year
- 7% full-time workers use drugs
- 7% full-time workers are heavy drinkers
- this translates to over \$7000 loss to companies per employee

How Do Hospital Workers Feel About:



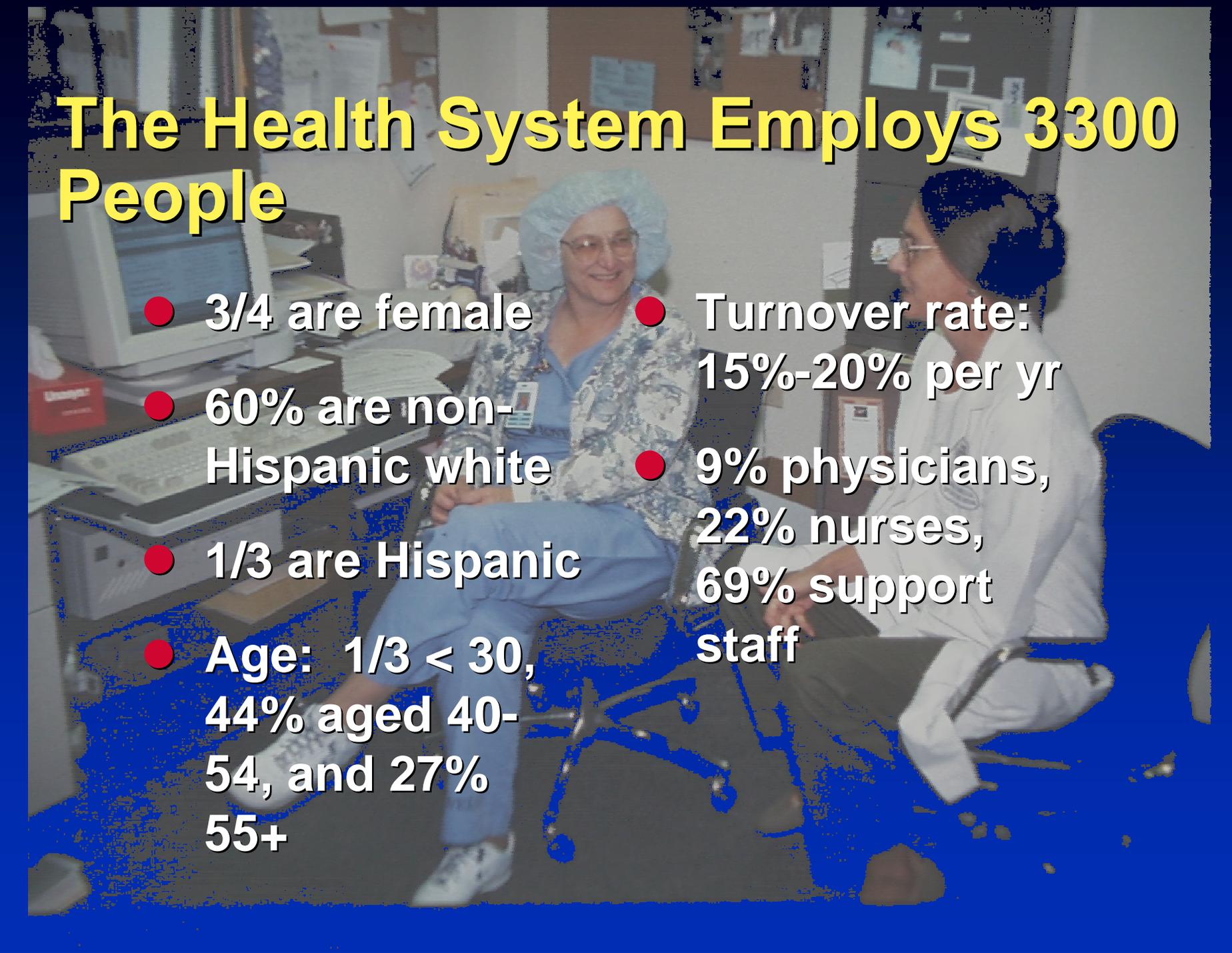
- Health Concerns
- Substance abuse
- Random drug testing

Setting



- **Hospital, primary/specialty care clinics, administrative offices**
- **Staff model system**
- **Group practice HMO**
- **15 sites in 6 communities**

The Health System Employs 3300 People



- 3/4 are female
- 60% are non-Hispanic white
- 1/3 are Hispanic
- Age: 1/3 < 30, 44% aged 40-54, and 27% 55+
- Turnover rate: 15%-20% per yr
- 9% physicians, 22% nurses, 69% support staff

Focus Groups

Focus Groups

- 138 subjects recruited by flyers, newsletters, word-of-mouth
- 5 questions, 1.5 hours, 17 groups
- documented by court reporter
- analyzed with *Ethnograph*



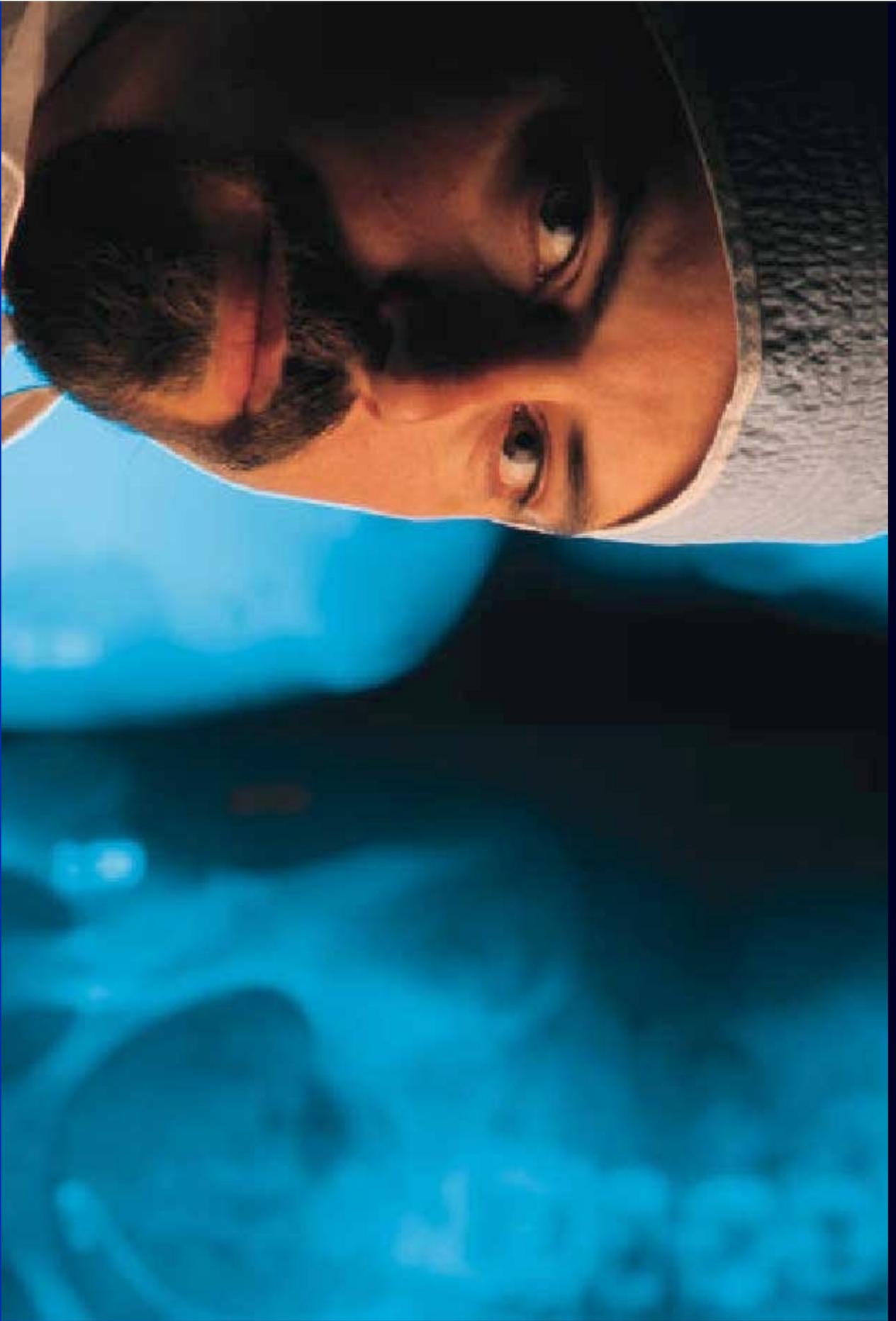
Purpose of the Study

To better understand
employee health concerns
and concerns about
substance misuse

The number ONE health concern

- Work-related **STRESS** was the most commonly-cited health concern
- Number 2 was fear of acquiring diseases (infections and debilitating chronic diseases)

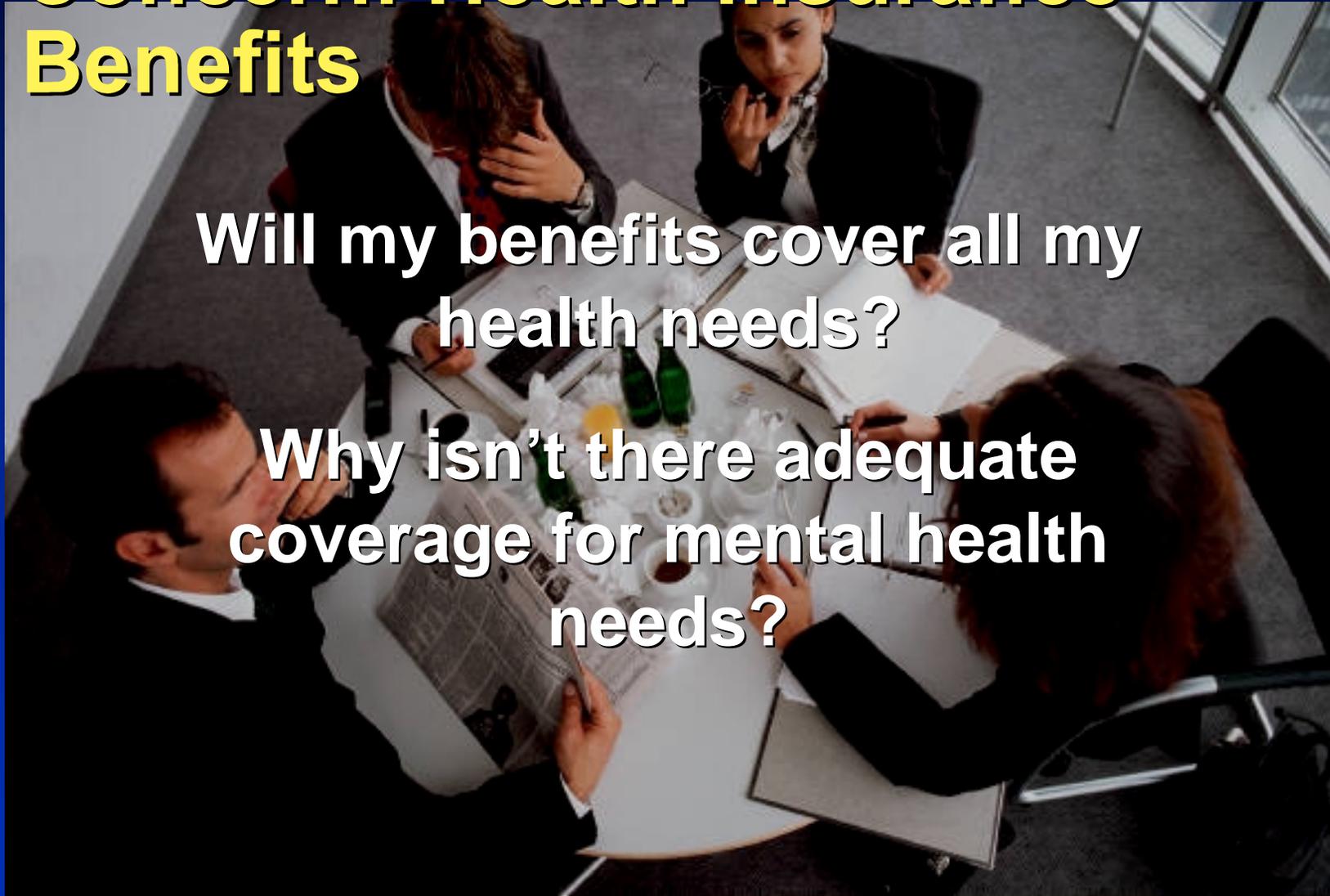




Third Most Prominent Concern: Health Insurance Benefits

Will my benefits cover all my
health needs?

Why isn't there adequate
coverage for mental health
needs?



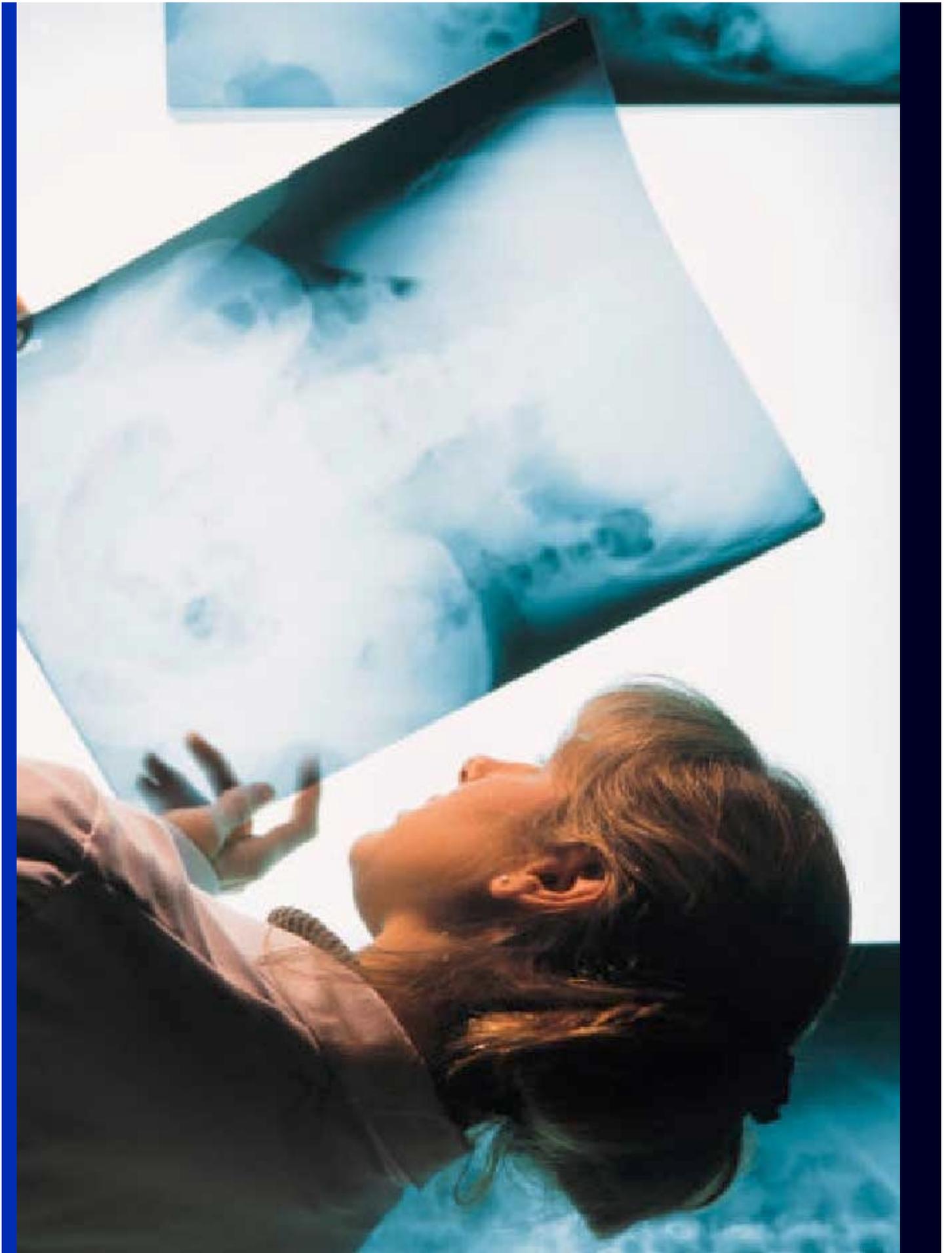
“We are being placed in a higher stressed environment with poor coverage.”

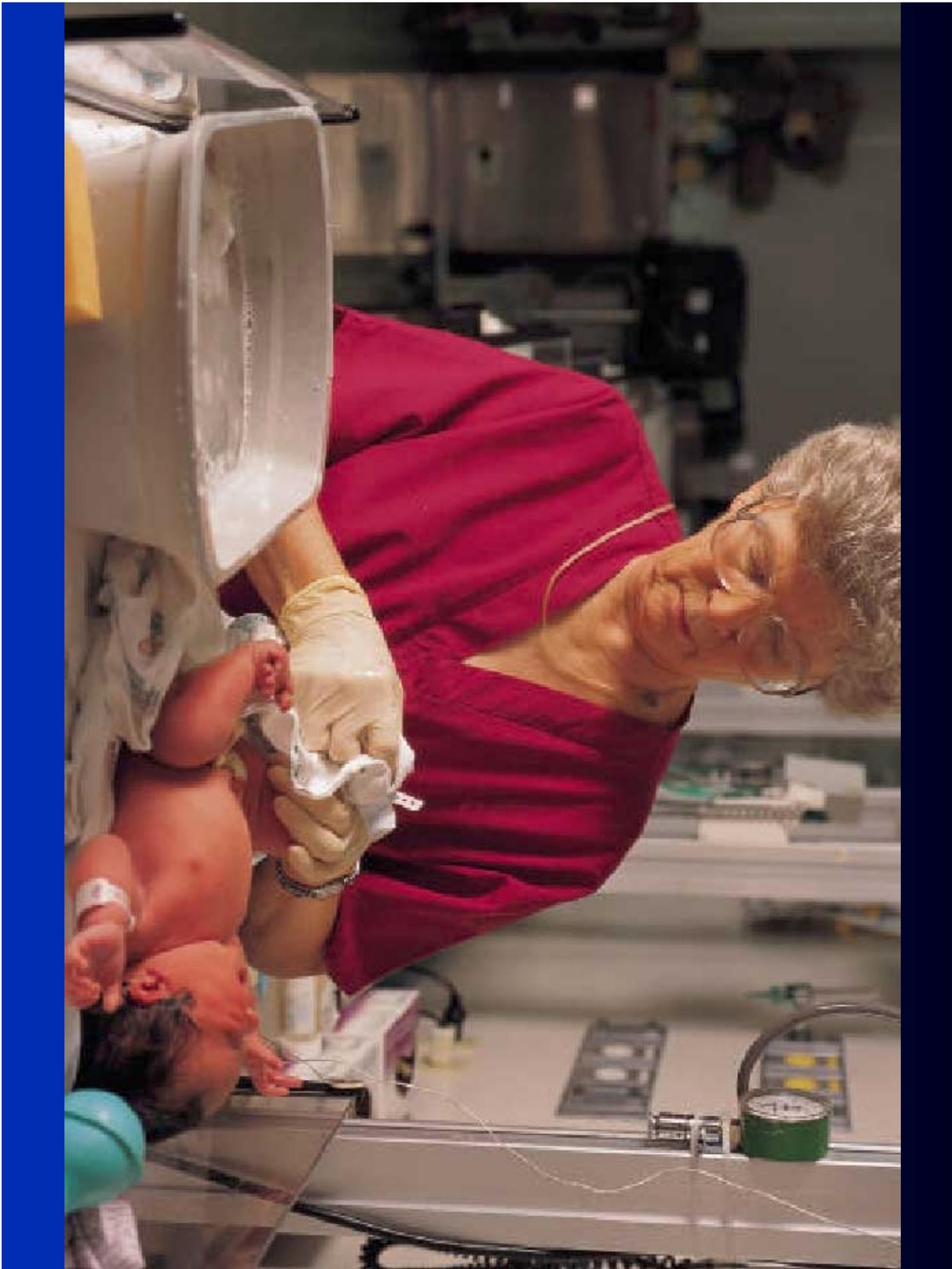




Is Substance Abuse a Problem Among Your Co-Workers?

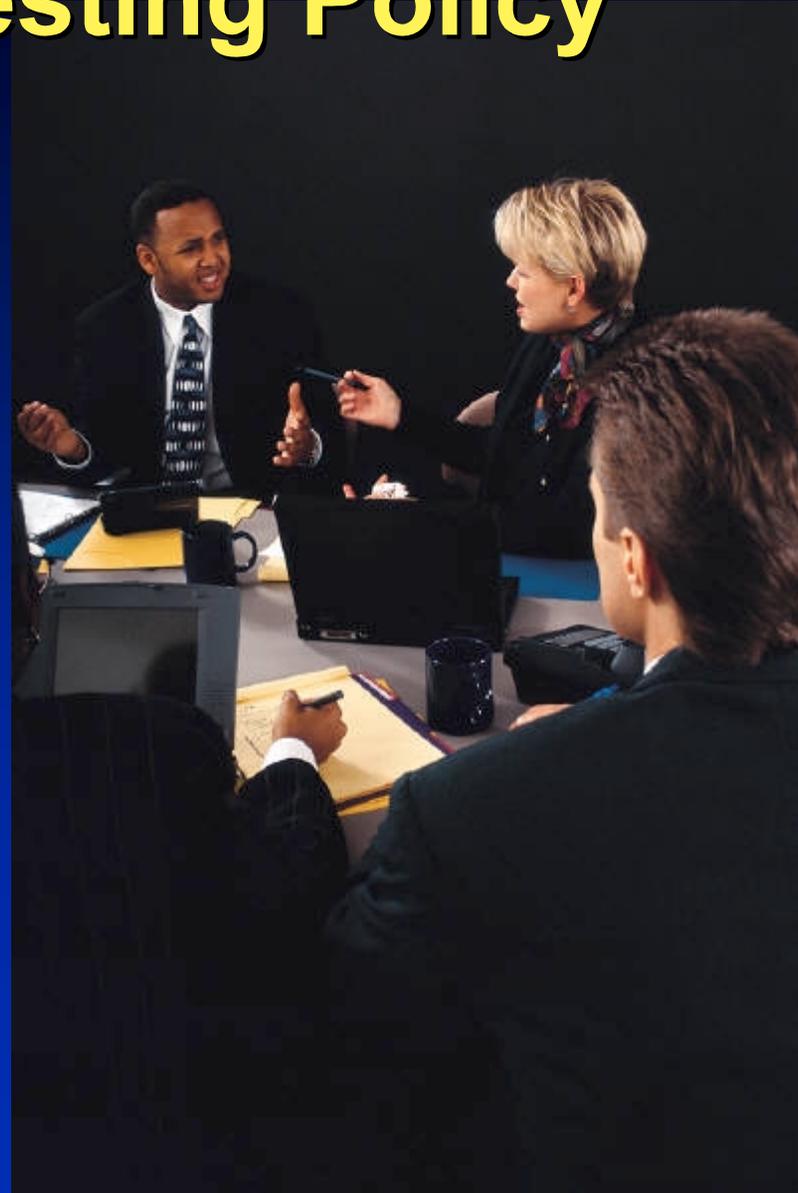
- 1/3 said no
- 38% knew of one or more incidents involving an impaired employee (over half of these alcohol-related)
- 17% said substance abuse was a current, occasional or former problem at this facility
- 14% prevalence in family members





Current Drug Testing Policy

- Post Hire
- For Cause



Random Drug Testing

- **Employees were in favor of random drug testing**
- **Concerns about fairness**
- **Ambivalence exists around impaired workers and whether to report them**



**“Hospital staff
have the
responsibility for
somebody’s life.”**

Summary

- **The most common health concerns were stress, fear of disease, and health insurance coverage adequacy**
- **2/3 of health care personnel have had to deal with substance-abusing co-workers**
- **The vast majority supported random drug testing as a means of preventing substance abuse**

Acknowledgements

Narrator:

**Sandra Lapham, MD MPH, Director Behavioral
Health Research Center of the Southwest**

Voices:

Don Peyton, BA, BS

Janet C'de Baca, PhD

Cindy Gregory, PhD

Erin Peoples

Joyce Welt

Rene Simmons, BSSW