Dear Alice,

I, like many Americans, take Zoloft, 50mg a day.

My question is: Will this show up or alter in any way a pre-employment drug test for future jobs? Should I even mention that I am taking it to the screener?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Zoloft, a medication that is prescribed to treat depression and anxiety disorders, should not appear in any way on pre-employment drug tests. Drug tests target a limited number of functional drug groups, including the molecular derivatives for tetrahydrocannabinol (THC, the active chemical in marijuana), opiates (morphine), PCP, cocaine, and amphetamines. Chemicals with similar derivatives, such as crystal meth and heroin, are also identified. Having said all of this, there is still the slightest chance for a false positive (testing positive for a substance that was never used) occurring. But if it were to occur, the testing staff would conduct secondary tests to make certain that there is no error to verify their findings.

Testing has improved greatly over the past few years, not only to ensure accuracy, but also for employers to avoid law suits from those wrongly accused of using illegal substances.

Interestingly, the Zoloft website does not have any warnings regarding those taking the drug falsely testing positive for another drug or of Zoloft itself showing up on drug tests. There are also no warnings of this type in any medical literature.

So, it is unnecessary to disclose that you take Zoloft or similar medications to a future employer, drug test or not. Medical information is confidential and employers do not have the right to inquire about it unless you give them signed consent to release it. If they are interested in your mental health history, they will ask you directly and won't test for anti-depressants in any drug test.

Alice!

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