

Employer **TA CENTER**

Stay at Work and Return to Work: A Smart Strategy for Corporate Continuity

October 27, 2015

Presented by the National Employer Policy, Research and
Technical Assistance Center for Employers on the Employment of
People with Disabilities (Employer TA Center)



Stay at Work and Return to Work: A Smart Strategy for Corporate Continuity

Brett Sheats

National Project Director

Employer TA Center



Stay at Work and Return to Work: A Smart Strategy for Corporate Continuity

We Value You.

Your input, ideas, and comments are important to the Employer TA Center!

We appreciate your completion of the customer satisfaction survey of this webinar that will be sent to you via email.

Thank you.

Stay at Work and Return to Work: A Smart Strategy for Corporate Continuity

Employer TA Center

- Resource for employers seeking to recruit, hire, retain and advance people with disabilities
- Addresses both public and private sectors
- Funded by ODEP under a cooperative agreement with The Viscardi Center
- Collaborative of partners with different perspectives
- Activities map to ODEP's priorities, including its role supporting WRP.jobs

Cultivating Talent for Tomorrow: The Value of Interns with Disabilities



Susan Picerno, MSW

Program Specialist

ODEP

Stay at Work and Return to Work: A Smart Strategy for Corporate Continuity

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Stay at Work and Return to Work: A Smart Strategy for Corporate Continuity

Audience Polling Question #1

**What type of
organization do you
work for?**



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Terri Rhodes, MBA, CPDM, CCMP
Chief Executive Officer



Stay at Work and Return to Work: A Smart Strategy for Corporate Continuity

Why You Should Have a RTW Program

- RTW programs plan for reintegration to productivity
 - Value Employee Contributions
 - Transitional work
 - Stay at Work

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Successful RTW Programs

- Help reduce costs
- Return employees to work quickly
- Minimize negative impact of employee absence
- Enhance employee morale
- Help to create clear understanding of the requirements under the ADA
- Ensure transitional work is productive

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Strategies & Best Practices

- Create a Culture of RTW
- Include all Stakeholders
- Train Manager/Supervisors
- Physician Education
- Get Unions on Board
- Vendor involvement

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Audience Polling Question #2

Who are you?



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Lou Orslene, MPIA, MSW, CPDM

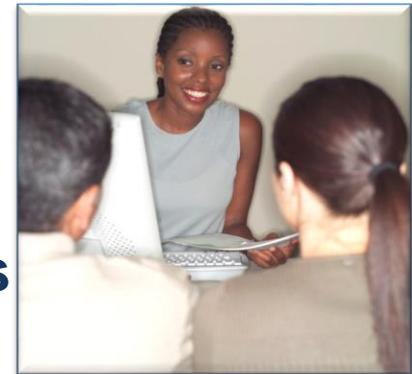
Co-Director





JAN Consultations

- **Approximately 52% of our customers are employers**
- **83% of customers involve stay-at-work or return-to-work**
- **Most of the people being accommodated are over the age of 46**
- **Length of service for employees is 7 years**
- **Motor impairments still represent a large portion of consultations although chronic health conditions such as diabetes, cancer, multiple sclerosis, and mental health conditions are often at issue**



ADAAA - SAW and RTW

The ADAAA requires that an employer make reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability, unless the employer can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship.

This extends to stay at work and return to work as well as injured employees returning after a workers compensation claim.

The key to coverage here is whether or not the person meets the definition of disability under the ADAAA.

Disability and Accommodation

Physical Injuries:

- **Modify the work-site (ex. restroom, breakroom, meeting rooms, front entrance)**
- **Modify work station (ex. Raise or lower desk or files, modify frequently used office equipment)**
- **Provide compact lifting devices to push and pull supplies and tools from storage**
- **Provide low task chairs, stand/lean stools, and anti-fatigue mats**
- **Provide alternate input devices (ex. Voice input and output technology, alternative mouse or keyboard)**
- **Implement ergonomic workstation design, e.g., monitor riser, articulating keyboard tray, footrest, chair, arm supports etc.**

Mental health condition:

- **Allow telephone calls during work hours to doctors/counselors**
- **Allow employee to take strategic breaks to use stress reduction techniques**
- **Use of job coach or mentor**
- **Change in supervisory method**

Disability and Accommodations

Deaf or hard of hearing:

- Address environmental factors, i.e., background noise, lighting, and positioning
- Provide visual or tactile alerting device
- Provide an assistive listening device (ALD)
- Provide communication access real-time translation (CART)
- Provide meeting notes or recording

Blind or low vision:

- Magnify written material using hand/stand/optical magnifiers
- Provide large print material or screen reading software
- Control glare by adding a glare screen to the computer
- Install proper office lighting
- Allow frequent rest breaks

Disability and Accommodations

Cancer or multiple sclerosis:

- Schedule periodic rest breaks away from the workstation
- Allow a flexible work schedule and flexible use of leave time
- Provide parking close to the work-site and an accessible entrance
- Move workstation close to other work areas, office equipment, and break rooms
- Telework
- Part-time work

Limitations related to daily living:

- Allow use of a service animal at work
- Allow use of a personal attendant at work
- Provide for modified breaks

RTW Situations and Solutions

Situation: An employee working in concrete production had a work related back injury resulting in pain when standing for long periods of time and had been on leave under the FMLA.

Solution: The employee was able to return to work after being provided with a sit/stand stool and assistance with lifting when necessary. The employer reported the accommodation enabled the business to keep a valuable employee and saved the cost of hiring and retraining a new employee. The employer reported that the industry suffers from high turnover. The typical cost is between \$75 and \$150.

Situation: An insurance industry employee who uses computers extensively developed low vision and was out on leave as a result.

Solution: The employer provided screen reading software, more lighting at work space, and hand/desk magnifier. These accommodations enabled the employee to return to work. The employer reported that that the business was able to retain an excellent, skilled professional. The accommodation cost \$700.

Situation: An employee who was the first line supervisor in a food and beverage store had an infection resulting from a surgery. The infection required an extended time to heal.

Solution: The employer secured the employee's position until the employee was able to come back to work. The employer reported that the accommodation enabled the business to keep an excellent employee. The first line supervisors are reported to be the key to survival for this type of store. Thus, it is important to train and keep excellent staff. This was viewed as a win-win for both parties. There was no reported cost for this accommodation.

RTW Human and Business Value



Dan, a heavy equipment mechanic, slipped while stepping out off of a machine onto steps covered with freezing rain. Dan fell down and landed on his knee, causing a tear that eventually lead to a surgical repair. Once Dan was medical stable and released with restrictions, the company's return to work coordinator and ergonomic specialist conducted a job analysis, which determined that the physical ability to kneel and squat were essential to performing the heavy equipment job. Unfortunately, these were the very same physical demands that Dan was restricted from doing on what was now a permanent basis.

Unwilling to give up, the return to work team evaluated the work area. They determined the only thing keeping Dan from returning to his job was his inability to maneuver and work on the equipment. So, was there another way of maneuvering? The team identified a hydraulic lift that could be used to lift the work product to waist height. This allowed Dan to avoid the kneeling, squatting, and heavy lifting he was restricted from doing, while still allowing him to perform all the duties of his heavy equipment mechanic job. This job modification not only returned Dan to his full time job, it came with an additional benefit; the ability for other workers to use the lift, thereby preventing additional work injuries.

The cost of the hydraulic lift? \$2,667. The return of a valued employee? Priceless.

For More Information



Contact JAN

(800) 526-7234 (V) - (877) 781-9403 (TTY)

AskJAN.org

jan@askjan.org

(304) 216-8189 via Text

janconsultants via Skype



Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

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Audience Polling Question #3

**Do you have a formal
Return to Work
Program?**



The Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Policy Collaborative



Jane Ryan

Return to Work Section Head



Stay at Work and Return to Work: A Smart Strategy for Corporate Continuity

Who We Are

- Established 1865
- Over 50,000 employees
- Three group practices
- Mayo Clinic Health System
- Mayo Clinic in Rochester ranked best hospital in the nation by US News & World Reports, 2014-2015



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Philosophy

To serve Mayo Clinic through an integrated disability management program which maximizes employee resources and potential, minimizing the cost and duration of disability. Mayo recognizes the value and contributions of all staff and supports its employees during medical recovery by utilizing work as therapy in an environment focused on communication, collaboration and respect.

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Guiding Principles

- Reinforce the value of having employees productively and safely at work
 - Work is a determinant of good health
 - Work improves socioeconomic status and socioeconomic status drives health
 - Social aspects of work helps sustain good mental and physical health
 - Supporting employees in stay at work and return to work provides benefits to all stakeholders
 - Productivity
 - The employee's experience
 - Reduced lost time
 - Reduced costs
 - Enhanced recovery
 - Improved return to work rates
 - Compliance

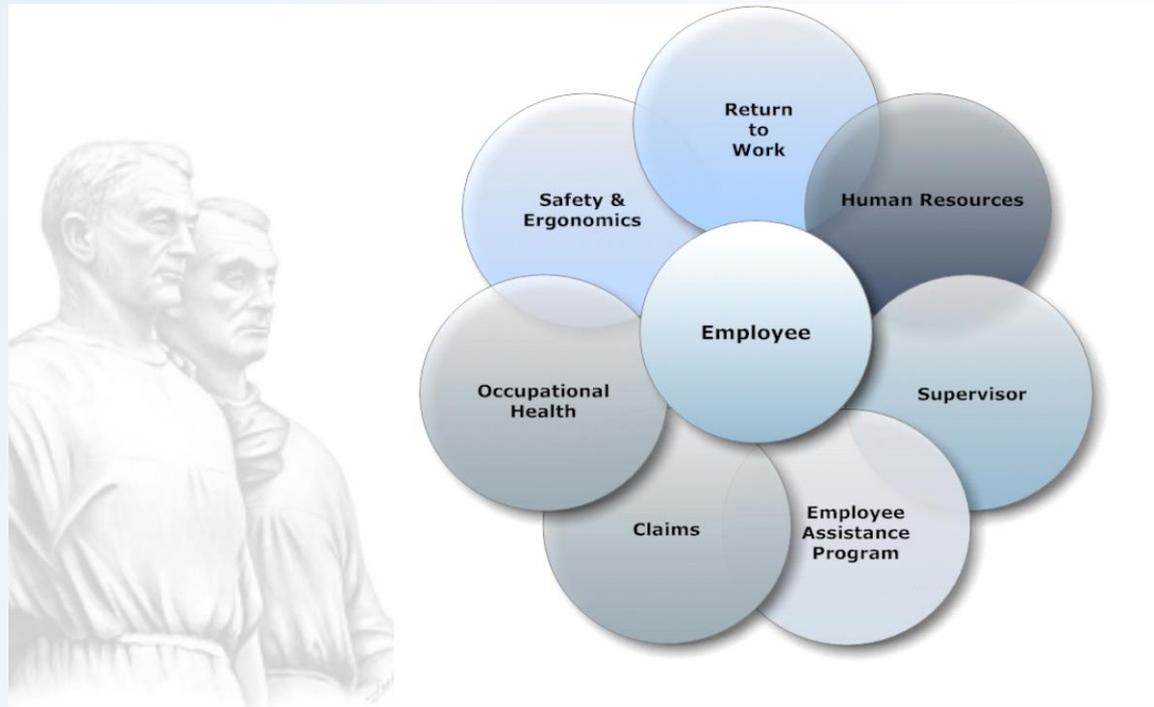
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Absence Management Success*

- Return to Work Services for all injuries and illnesses
- Centralized reporting of absence
- STD and FMLA managed by same resource
- Referrals to Health Management Programs
- Outcome reporting

* The Guardian Absence Management Activity IndexSM and Study, 2015

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Stay at Work and Return to Work: A Smart Strategy for Corporate Continuity

Key Features

- Occupational and non occupational
- Self insured, self administered WC & LTD
- STD absence management
- FMLA administration
- On site Occupational Health Service
- Return to Work Coordinators
- Job Search Program

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Return to Work Services

- Policy support
- The interactive process
- Transitional job bank
- Medical case management
- Duration guidelines
- Work accommodations
- Job Analyses
- Vocational assessments and job search
- Management education

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Roles & Responsibilities

- Employee
 - Keep medical appointments, comply with recommended treatment, provide medical documentation to develop a return to work recommendation and plan
 - Review work capacity with supervisor
 - Participate in transitional/modified work
 - Communicate concerns about safety or productivity and offer suggestions to improve productivity and safety

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Roles and Responsibilities

- Supervisor Responsibilities
 - Recognize and manage potential FMLA situations
 - Review work recommendations with employee to insure common understanding
 - Consider ideas for and implement accommodations
 - Connect with RTW coordinators for help with accommodations and explore alternate assignments
 - Communicate concerns about safety and productivity

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Roles and Responsibilities

- Occupational Health Service
 - Assess fitness for work and communicate work restrictions to supervisor and employee describing employee's work abilities
 - Engage health care providers in discussions about return to work
 - Recommend wellness and disease management programs

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Roles and Responsibilities

- Claims Adjusters
 - Insures the right benefit is paid
 - Investigates claims
 - Authorizes WC medical treatment
 - Issues wage loss benefits
 - Prepares state reporting for WC

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Roles and Responsibilities

- Human Resources
 - Coach supervisors and employees through the leave management and accommodation policies
 - Insure policies support concepts of stay at & return to work

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Roles and Responsibilities

- RTW Coordinator
 - Facilitates team and resources for return to work planning
 - Provides accommodations
 - Supports supervisors and employees through the disability management process
 - Uses transferable skills analysis
 - Provides vocational/career counseling in job search
 - Facilitates interactive discussions
 - Insures ADA compliance
 - Job analyses

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- **Reporting**

Lost Time Rate

Mayo Clinic .98

Hospital Industry 2.56

Return to Work Rate

94%

Return to Work Savings

\$8.8M for WC and LTD

Customer Satisfaction

90% Employees; 88% Supervisors

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Audience Polling Question #4

**Do you provide
transitional work?**



The Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Policy Collaborative



Yonatan Ben-Shalom

Project Director



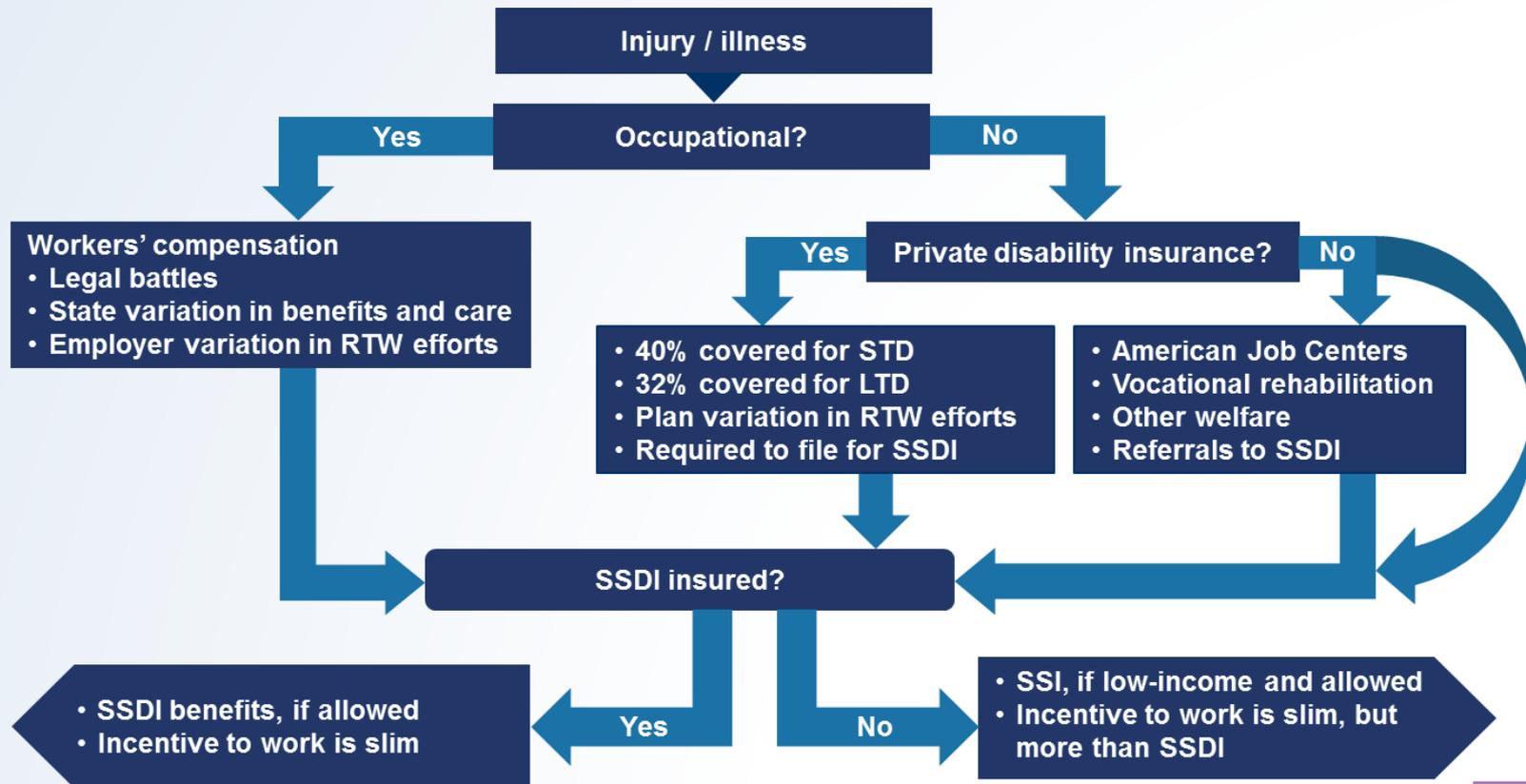
The Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Policy Collaborative

Overview

- A fragmented disability safety net
- Purpose of the SAW/RTW Policy Collaborative
- Collaborative activities
- Policy work group recommendations
- (Potential) implications for employers

The Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Policy Collaborative

A fragmented disability safety net



The Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Policy Collaborative

Purpose of the SAW/RTW Policy Collaborative

- Focus on workers with medical condition that puts them at risk of job loss
- Inform federal, state efforts to improve SAW/RTW outcomes
 - Engage with the private sector
 - Consider options for supporting private sector initiatives

The Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Policy Collaborative

Collaborative activities

- Year 1: SAW/RTW Community of Practice, webinars, studies
- Year 2: policy work groups, webinars, online dialogues, strategic outreach and dissemination

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Policy action papers

- Targeting Early Intervention to Workers Who Need Help to Stay in the Labor Force
- Promoting Retention or Reemployment of Workers After a Significant Injury or Illness
- Establishing Accountability to Reduce Job Loss After Injury or Illness

Link to [reports, briefs](#)

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Targeting early intervention

- States
 - Develop strategic plans for expanding services
 - Expand services to state employees
- Federal government
 - Support state efforts
 - Expand services to federal workers
 - Encourage federal contractors to expand services to their employees
- Expand the evidence for early intervention

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Promoting retention/reemployment

- Disseminate information to frontline managers
- Support establishment of employer resource networks (ERNs)
- Subsidize cost of accommodations and/or lost productivity
- Promote best practices
- Consider expanding Ticket to Work to include those not yet on SSDI

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Establishing accountability

- Make preservation/restoration of work priority outcomes in public health and medical care
- Develop formal mechanisms for tracking accountability for outcomes among relevant stakeholders, including employers
- Design, implement strategies that make accountability real, disrupt status quo
- Designate lead federal agency to coordinate ongoing multi-sector initiative

The Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Policy Collaborative

(Potential) implications for employers

- Federal/state support
 - Technical assistance
 - Targeted dissemination of information
 - Employer subsidies
- Accountability
 - Lead federal agency
 - Tracking mechanism/s
 - Certification program (akin to OSHA's VPP)

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Questions for Panelists



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