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DSI Work Solutions
Concepts that work. Solutions that last.

Work Solutions Insight

Your work injury management newsletter April 2008

THE INJURY LIFE-CYCLE

Excerpts from the DSI National Conference presentation by Manny Kiesser, Cast Health Manager, Disneyland Resort, Anaheim CA

Mr Kiesser, speaking from an employer viewpoint, analyzed the issues regarding a less-than-effective approach to solving work injury problems. He presented a road map for creating a safe and healthful workplace

His main points: ...

Recognizing the foundation of health or injury

- A job is designed before anyone is hired into it. That design has inherent hazards that could lead to injury
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- Working safe is, at its core, simply maintaining the “right fit” between the worker and the work
- Injuries happen when there is a “wrong fit” between the worker and work, or because of design hazards or deviations from design conditions

Initial treatment and Return to Work

- The initial response to work injury sets the pace for final outcomes. The three keys are **conscious, proactive and informed** decision making to maintain at work or begin early return to work
- Once there is lost time, it leads to lack of case coordination,

IMPROVING RETURN TO WORK PROCESSES: TWO EXPERT POINTS OF VIEW

From the DSI Work Solutions national conference, Chicago IL Oct 2007

Two leadoff speakers at the DSI Chicago conference addressed how return to work can be viewed and improved within industry. A leading Liberty Mutual researcher and a corporate medical director made strong points had have mutual application

WILLIAM SHAW PhD, LIBERTY MUTUAL Subtopic: Why Supervisors and Workers have difficulties in creating a positive return to work situation: McClellan, Pransky et al, J Occup Rehabil 2001;11:33-41

Supervisors believe their job duties regarding injured workers have this ranking:

1. Complete injury report (90%)
2. Assess validity of claim (65%)
3. Protect company (53%)
4. Communicate with worker (41%)
5. Include worker (30%)

Significant challenges

- Encouraging early reporting
- Documentation without blame
- Unhelpful physician restrictions

contested claims and possible disability. A life is changed forever [Read more](#)

- Co-worker support
- Job performance issues

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DECREASING WORK INJURY AND COSTS **By Dennis D. Isernhagen PT, President DSI Work Solutions inc**

It is exciting to see an increasing interest by employers and healthcare professionals in finding more effective ways to prevent and manage work injuries. With high costs of healthcare, an aging workforce and needless disability, the traditional work injury management model is not working well. Because of the complexity of this issue, no one discipline can provide a total solution. In addition, the uniqueness of each company because of their location, history, culture and resources make it impossible to implement a generic process that will meet the needs of all parties concerned.

Preventing and managing work related injuries requires a “process” that involves all disciplines and workers. It is a “team” event that requires the expertise of individuals focused on the same goals. Each player needs to be aware of and respect the abilities of the other players. Goal setting involves the input and buy-in of all players. At the core of the process is the ability to match the worker to the work to insure safety and capability. For example, the financial and production managers’ goals are productivity, but they often don’t realize that lost and light duty time removes productive people. Medical professionals have the goal of making a person well again but don’t realize that return to work should be a primary goal also. The safety team may have a goal of reducing OSHA recordables, but they don’t realize that workers who are afraid to report injuries often go on to have far greater severity of their problem. Thus, managers, human resources, health services, production, safety, workers’ compensation and disability managers meet to meld their needs into one productive goal of **reducing injuries and their costs...** [Read more](#)

ESTIMATING THE COSTS OF OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES: **By Scott Ege, PT MS, Ege WorkSmart Solutions PC**

It’s no secret that occupational injuries and illnesses continue to have an impact on the bottom line financial performance for employers. The results of this impact are often either positive or negative, depending on the employer’s safety performance. We also know that the “tall pole” related to the most common occupational injuries and illnesses are related to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, employers spend an estimated \$13 – 20 billion per year on MSD-related conditions. This cost consists of both direct and indirect costs.

Common solutions to addressing the “MSD dilemma” include job function matching strategies, ergonomics, early intervention, or even case management. Regardless of what solution(s) an employer implements, the ultimate result must demonstrate some level of positive performance.

OSHA recently released an e-tool to assist consultants and/or employers in estimating the “total” costs of occupational injuries and illnesses and the impact on a company’s profitability. This interactive program is called “Safety Pays”. It can be accessed via the web at [OSHA Small Business Assistance > Safety Pays Program](#). This system uses a company’s profit margin, the AVERAGE costs of an injury or illness, and an indirect cost multiplier to project the amount of sales a company would need to generate in order to cover those costs. Businesses can use this information to predict the direct and indirect impact of injuries and illnesses and the estimated sales needed to compensate for these losses...[Read more](#)