POWER Return to Work Council Meeting

September 20, 2012
POWER Return to Work Council

Welcome

Gary Steinberg
Acting Director, Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs
Introduction

OWCP has established the POWER Return to Work Council. The Council is chaired by OWCP Acting Director Gary Steinberg and Federal Employees’ Compensation Director Douglas Fitzgerald and is comprised of representatives from the 14 agencies subject to goal 7 as well as ad hoc members from OSHA and ODEP as well as OPM and CAP.
The 14 permanent, chartered Council members represent the 14 agencies subject to goal 7 of the President’s POWER initiative. They include:

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of the Air Force
- Department of the Army
- Department of Defense
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of the Interior
- Department of Justice
- Department of Labor
- Department of the Navy
- Department of Transportation
- Department of the Treasury
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Social Security Administration

Additional ad hoc members of the council include:
- Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP)
- US Office of Personnel Management
- Office of Disability Employment Policy
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Mission: The Council will assist OWCP in developing strategies that federal agencies may utilize to increase the successful return to work of employees who have injuries and/or disabilities as a result of workplace trauma or illness.

Annual Report: The Council will produce an annual report which outlines Council activities and makes recommendations for the next year.
Council Charter

**Purposes:**

- Serves as a forum for discussion and exchange of best practices in the area of return to work.

- Reviews the results of analytical studies on return to work and promote sharing and implementation of best practices identified.

- Helps to form a bridge between the workers’ compensation and disability hiring personnel and establish a continuity of practice for the sharing of information, ideas and experiences.
FEDERAL RETURN-TO-WORK SYSTEM FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: BEST AND PROMISING PRACTICES

September 20, 2012

Office of Disability Employment Policy & Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs U.S. Department of Labor
Study Objective and Approach

- Conduct study to support the POWER Initiative and Executive Order on Disability Hiring (E.O. 13548)
- Document barriers and identify best and promising practices to increase successful RTW outcomes
- Reviewed data and reports to identify which agencies to examine
- Conducted initial interviews with managers at 12 agencies
- Selected DoD, TSA, VA, and Architect of the Capitol for in-depth interviews at different components within each agency
Best and Promising Practices

- Best Practice
  - Must have a certain level of evidence to back it up
    - Quantifiable data
    - Replicated across facilities or agencies

- Promising Practices
  - Useful to specific facilities but:
    - New policy or program that has not been tested
    - Not replicable in other agencies
Promising Practice – Centralization or Regionalization of Services

- Agency – Air Force
- Advantages of Centralization of RTW Services at Agency Level:
  - Streamlined case processing
  - Full-time case processors (CP)
  - Mandate training for all CPs
  - Challenge more claims
- Evidence supporting practice:
  - Challenged 347 claims (18% of total) and 41% were upheld
  - Reviewed long-term cases, cost avoidance of over $12 million
Best Practice – Full-time Director

- Agency – VBA
- Advantages of Employing a Full-Time Director:
  - Provide guidance for CPs
  - Formulate program-wide policies
  - Analyze program and identify barriers
  - Give program more direction
- Evidence supporting practice:
  - VBA hired permanent director 3 years ago
  - $4.7 million saved in first two years
Best Practice – Have Assistance in Place for CPs

- Agency – DoD, VHA
- DoD Liaison Program:
  - Full-time assets located near DOL Regional Offices
  - Assist DoD CPs with case reviews, training, reemployment, etc.
  - Great resource for collateral duty CPs
- VHA Compensation Coordinators:
  - Provide assistance and direction at VISN level
  - Promote VA training, monitor progress, assist with communication
  - Typically have other HR-related duties
- Evidence supporting practice: Opinions from interviewees
Best Practice – TSA Contracted Nurse Program

- Agency – TSA
- Advantages of Contracted Nurse Program:
  - Provides assistance to CPs with medical questions
  - Helps identify modified work positions
  - Early intervention services for injured employees
  - Assistance to employees during medical process
- Evidence supporting practice:
  - From inception through 2009
    - Lost production days decreased 63 percent
    - Lost time decreased from 45 to 12 days
    - Injuries reduced by 74 percent
Agency – All

Advantages of Modified Work Positions:

- Return employees to work quickly
- Have permanent positions for injured workers
- Make employees feel needed/part of the team
- Saves the agency money

Evidence supporting practice:

- All agencies did this to some degree
- All VHA interviewees stressed the importance of the practice
Best Practice – DoD Pipeline Program

- Agency – DoD

- Advantages of the Pipeline Program:
  - DoD provides compensation and benefits for employees for one year
  - Centrally funded positions
  - Over hire authority
  - Employees promised full-time equivalent position after 1 year
  - Brings employees back faster when positions are not currently available

- Evidence supporting practice:
  - 1,062 employees participated
  - Cost avoidance of over $825 million
Best Practice – Create Easy-to-Understand Training Materials for CPs

- Agency – VBA
- Advantages of the Training Materials:
  - Provides quick assistance to CPs
  - Assists with overcoming the learning curve
  - Limits questions from CPs
- Evidence supporting practice:
  - Reduces the number of inquiries directors and others must respond to
  - Helps quickly acclimate new CPs in high-turnover organizations
Best Practice – FECA Working Groups

- Agency – DoD
- Advantages of the Working Groups:
  - Brings all aspects of RTW process together
  - Promotes communication and RTW
  - Identify potential safety concerns
  - Find potential jobs for injured employees
  - Review progress made on specific issues
- Evidence supporting practice: Anecdotal
  - Interviewees in DoD appreciated process and believed it helped create better communication
  - Facilities within VHA have also created similar groups
Best Practice – Review Periodic Roll Cases with OWCP

- Agency – TSA

- Advantages of the Periodic Roll Review:
  - Create summary of long-term cases
  - Devise plans of actions for each case
  - Build communication with OWCP
  - Return employees to work

- Evidence supporting practice:
  - Reviewed 206 cases at 6 OWCP Regional Offices
  - Changed status of 22 claims
  - Already saved $450,000, potential eventual savings of $15 million
Best Practice – Present Disability Payment Costs to Directors and Managers

- Agency – DHS among others
- Advantages of Presenting Disability Payment Costs:
  - Shows the money being spent on injured employees
  - Can be utilized as a tool for managers and directors
  - Builds communication within the agency
  - More focus on RTW programs
- Evidence supporting practice: anecdotal
  - Identified in prior POWER Council meeting
  - CPs have utilized this practice at the facility level
Real Solutions for Real Needs

Jerome D. Lyons
CAP Program Analyst

September 20, 2012
Real Solutions for Real Needs

- CAP was established in 1990 as DoD’s centrally funded program to provide accommodations
- Expanded by Congress in 2000 to support other Federal agencies
- Partnerships with 68 Federal agencies
- Over 114,000 accommodations

CAP Mission
- To provide assistive technology and accommodations to ensure people with disabilities and wounded service members have equal access to the information environment and opportunities in the Department of Defense and throughout the Federal government
CAP Customers

- Federal employees with disabilities
- Federal managers ready to hire and accommodate
- Federal employees that develop a disabling condition
- Federal employees returning from a Workers’ Compensation injury
- Teleworkers with disabilities
- Returning wounded Service members
CAP Services

- Provide assistive technology and training
- Conduct needs assessments and technology demonstrations
- Provide training on disability management and on creating an accessible environment
- Support the compliance of federal regulations
Assistive Technology

Dexterity Impairments
- Alternative keyboards, input devices and voice recognition software

Vision Impairments
- Screen readers, Braille terminals, magnification software and CCTV’s

Hearing Loss
- Assistive listening devices (ALDs), TTYs, videophones and captioning services

Cognitive/TBIs Impairments
- Cueing and memory aids, literacy software, screen readers and ALDs

Embedded Technology
- Magnifier, Text to Speech Narrator, On Screen Keyboard

Real Solutions for Real Needs
Accommodations Outside CAP’s Scope

- Agency/Office Equipment
  - Monitors
  - Memory
  - Services that incur monthly service charges
    - SmartPhones
- Ergonomic Equipment
  - Chairs (Job Offer)
  - Glare Protection
  - Foot Rest
CAP Technology Evaluation Center (CAPTEC)

- Assist individuals and supervisors in choosing appropriate computer and electronic accommodations
- Wide variety of assistive technology
  - VTC capability
  - Tours
- Located in the Pentagon (2D1049)
  - 703-693-5160 (V)
  - 703-693-6189 (TTY)
www.cap.mil
Accommodation Solutions

CAP's mission is to ensure that individuals with disabilities have the information and support they need to access and participate in the wider society. We work with organizations to identify, evaluate, and select the appropriate accommodation solutions that allow individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of their jobs. By working with CAP, you can assess the impact of various assistive technologies on the performance of people with disabilities.

CAP offers you access to the latest assistive technologies available to improve your capabilities. These technologies, which can be used to maintain or improve your ability to perform your job or seek employment, are available to any individual with a disability, including those with physical disabilities as well as hidden cognitive disabilities. To find the solutions that work best for you, you can search the CAP site for solutions, or you can browse by disability.

Find Your CAP Accommodation Solution

Search CAP

Request an Accommodation from CAP

If you are ready to place a request for an accommodation or need more information about CAP services or resources, we can help.

ERP: Assessment and Evaluation

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Real Solutions for Real Needs
Retention: Workers’ Compensation

- Assist Workers’ Compensation claimants who obtain “on the job” injuries that result in an accepted claim in their return-to-work process
  - Work with Workers’ Compensation officials to evaluate needs of employees
  - Conduct CAP accommodation needs assessments
  - Provide appropriate assistive technology or related accommodations
  - Review Telework options
CAP Case Study

- Our Pentagon Survivor
- CAPTEC Needs Assessment $00.00
- Speech Recognition $695.00
- Telephone headset $49.00
- Voice Activated Phone $90.00
- Pillow Switch $39.00
- Telework/Workers’ Compensation
  - Computer $2,750.00
  - Set up and Training $1,690.00
- Total $5,313.00
Resources

- Agency Disability Program Managers
- Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program
  - Website: www.cap.mil
  - Email: CAP@tma.osd.mil
- Department of Labor
  - Job Accommodation Network www.askjan.org
- Office of Personnel Management
  - Executive Order: www.opm.gov/disability/eo.asp
  - USAJobs: www.usajobs.gov/individualswithdisabilities.asp
  - Feds Hire Vets www.fedshirevets.gov
Cary Leventhal
Director, Employee Safety & Workers’ Compensation
Federal Aviation Administration
Revisions to POWER RTW Goal

• New Baseline for POWER Goal 7
  – Agency performance in FY2011 is new baseline
• No change to methodology for setting targets: Two percent improvement per year from new baseline or meet the minimum target
• Minimum target for FY2013 is 85%
• Maximum target for four agencies with smallest volume of cases will be 93%
• Maximum target for all others will be 95%
Goal 7: RTW Rate
New Baselines and Targets
POWER Council
Questions and Answers