

**California RETAIN Demonstration Project**

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**Proposed RETAIN Demonstration Project Location:** California proposes to pilot RETAIN in Sacramento County and San Diego County. The specific service locations in the pilot will be determined by early 2019. If California is successful in Phase 2, the project will expand into additional areas based on the likelihood that they can be readily added to the research study.

**Target Populations:** In the Phase 1 Pilot, the project will primarily focus on Workers Compensation applicants at risk of becoming disconnected from their existing hospitality, warehousing, or construction industry employer due to a musculoskeletal injury. California RETAIN pilot will also conduct research to explore working with beneficiaries in the California State Disability Insurance Program who appear to be likely to exhaust their benefits before returning to work. Looking towards the Phase 2 control group evaluation study, California plans to include 2000 participants each in the control group and in the treatment groups.

**Project Goal:** The long-term goal that weaves together all aspects of this project is--Preventing long-term poverty (absolute and relative) for working Californians due to a disability caused by illness, injury, or medical condition that has the potential to inhibit or prevent continued employment or labor force participation.

*OUTCOME: INCREASE EMPLOYMENT RETENTION*

*Primary Prevention--Maintaining Attachment to the Workforce:* The backbone of California RETAIN is a team of RtW Coordinators managing health and employment service delivery including the development and implementation of a plan to support an employee in returning to or staying at work. California will develop (or modify) a training on occupational health best practices such as those provided in the Center for Occupational Health and Education (COHE).

*Secondary Prevention--Targeted Employment and Retraining Services:* RtW Coordinators will be able to provide vocational and return to work counseling, develop an individualized SAW/RTW

plan of action with the disabled worker.

*Tertiary Prevention--Improving the Return-to-Work Environment:* RtW Coordinators and AJCC staff will provide technical assistance to employers on implementing interventions specific to individual workers. California RETAIN will build the capacity of AJCCs to assist employers to better understand employment and retention for workers with disabilities. The project will use website “workplacedisability.org” to locate resources and training for employers.

*OUTCOME: REDUCE NEED for FEDERAL DISABILITY BENEFITS*

RTW Coordinator will assist workers who are about to exhaust their State Disability or Workers Comp benefit to better understand the challenges of long term SSA benefits and the limits to income and other quality of life issues.

*OUTCOME 3: INCREASE SYSTEMS COLLABORATION*

The project proposes to develop a variety of Workforce Occupational Health Resources that include elements of the Washington COHE model as well as incorporate the existing IRT/Integrated Resource Team approach. RETAIN IRTs are the mechanism by which the RtW Coordinators provide services to individual workers that link Health Care to Workforce Services as well as communication, tracking and monitoring with workers participating in the project. California RETAIN will explore piloting a nominal fee to doctors for completing Activity Prescription forms similar to the State of Washington. The project will build cross systems data into the EDD CalJOBS data system to better help customer/patients return to work after a disability or other services to keep them attached to the workforce. In addition, the project will continue to educate State and LWDA staff on disability awareness, benefits planning, RTW/SAW and best practices for serving people with disabilities.

**Management/Operational Plan:** The Employment Development Department and the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University will collaborate to direct and manage the project. Stakeholders invited to be on the Leadership Team include the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB); The Department of Public Health (covers Occupational Health); The Department

of Healthcare Services administers MediCal/Medicaid and the Medi-Cal Working Disabled Program (Medicaid Buy-In); Major Health Care Systems in the pilot areas being asked to participate include: US HealthWorks, Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Health, Dignity Health, Sharpe Memorial, Scripps Health; Workers Comp insurance representatives are invited including the State Fund (public option) and Zenith Insurance (private option); Representatives from targeted LWDAs including SETA and the SDWP; other State Departments including: California Department of Industrial Relations (including Cal-OSHA), California EDD Workforce Services Branch; EDD State Disability Insurance Branch; the California Department of Rehabilitation; San Diego State University Interwork Institute staff .

The initial kick-off meeting will be in-person and held in Sacramento at the EDD before December 2018. California RETAIN will use various technology-based approaches to accelerate the planning process. Interwork has successfully operated complex projects with extensive use of telephone and web meeting formats and found this approach quite effective. RtW Coordinators and core staff will meet on a weekly or bi-weekly basis by telephone and through web meetings.

California RETAIN will use a four-tiered approach for development and continuing education of the staff, to maintain ongoing engagement of staff, and to reinforce fidelity of the demonstration and research activities. Intensive training “Boot camps” will provide the first level of professional development for California RETAIN staff. Statewide meetings/seminars comprise the second level of professional development. These will occur once during Phase 1 and then once or twice a year during Phase 2. Regularly scheduled conference calls provide the third level of professional development including weekly statewide staff calls will involve all RtW Coordinators, AJCC Staff, project staff from Interwork, relevant State staff, and relevant Health Care System staff. Mentoring, one-on-one training and technical assistance from the Project Co-Manager will provide the fourth level of professional development to enhance the capacity of the RtW Coordinators to develop person-driven employment action plans, and address other needs.