



RETAIN CT

Lead Agency: Connecticut Department of Labor

Primary Contacts: Karen Quesnel, CT DOL, Karen.quesnel@ct.gov

William Shaw, Ph.D., UConn Health Center, wshaw@uchc.edu

Project Title: RETAIN CT

Funders: U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA), and the Social Security Administration

Funding Received: \$2,111,269 (Phase 1)

In September 2018, the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL), Office of Workforce Competitiveness received a grant under Phase 1 of the “Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network” funded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), Employment and Training Administration (ETA), and the Social Security Administration. This grant supports CTDOL in leading a partnership of state agencies, a state-funded occupational health clinic, an insurer, and other stakeholders in the development of a program modeled after the Centers of Occupational Health and Education (COHE) program adopted by the State of Washington’s Department of Labor and Industries. The “RETAIN CT” program will improve communication and support services targeting early return-to-work (RTW) for Connecticut workers with either occupational or non-occupational musculoskeletal disorders.

Work disability represents an enormous burden for workers, employers, insurers, and for industrialized societies as a whole. With innovations in health care, increased longevity, expanded working years, and an aging workforce in the U.S., the burden of work disability has never been a more pressing issue for policy makers and government institutions.

To address the problem of growing work disability in the CT workforce, RETAIN CT will be a State-level intervention program designed to improve long-term return-to-work/stay-at-work outcomes for workers with emerging musculoskeletal concerns. This will represent a new coordinated effort among several State agencies as well as a multi-stakeholder collaboration including health care providers and insurers. The Phase 1 RETAIN CT program will serve the Capitol region to include a single insurer (The Hartford), a single RETAIN CT Training and Consultation Center (UConn Health) and Capital Workforce Partners, the workforce development board in the North Central region.

RETAIN CT activities will be divided between trained RETAIN CT providers, insurance case managers, and RTW coordinators. Providers will ensure best medical practice and be more involved and supported in RTW planning efforts. Insurance case managers will provide telephonic case management and proactive lost time tracking and employer coordination in the first few weeks of the claim, and field RTW coordinators in the workforce development system will be called upon after one month of work absence to provide more individualized planning, resource coordination, and participatory approach to job modification and RTW.

The goals of the program are to: (1) build capacity and public-private partnerships necessary to deliver specialized training for health care providers in RTW planning; (2) create a uniform billing system that enables insurance companies to reimburse providers; (3) develop a State-based early RTW coordinator program in the workforce development system; and (4) design metrics for the continuous evaluation and improvement of these systems.
