

**Private Sector
Vocational Technical Stakeholder Group (VTSG)
July 20, 2015 Tukwila**

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROVIDERS

Attendees

Heidi Trisler, Sound Vocational Services Inc.
Jay Sloane, Rehabilitation and Evaluation Services
Robert Gaffney, Gaffney Consulting
Brad Reckord, Rainier/Vocational Options Inc.
Nicole Hernandez, Advanced Vocational Solutions
Bradley Ehrlich, Career Opportunities Group
Kimberly North, Achieve Consulting Team
Todd Gendreau, Strategic Consulting Services Inc.

Absent

April Poier, Ability Vocational Consulting
Jan Veling, Pacific Rehabilitation Centers
Todd Martin, Martin Consulting
Roselyn Blair, Strategic Consulting Services Inc.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES/RETURN TO WORK SERVICES

Attendees

Ryan Guppy, RTW Partnerships Chief
Richard Wilson, RTW Compliance Program Manager
Bill Smith, Stay at Work Program Manager
Rheo Aieta, Private Sector Rehabilitation Services Supervisor
Donna Spencer, RTW Services Management Consultant
Kristine Ostler, Vocational Service Specialist Supervisor
Melissa Sutherland, Vocational Service Specialist Supervisor
Jody Witham, Vocational Performance Measure Administrator
Mary McEvoy, PSRS Customer Service Specialist II

Absent

Laurinda Grytness, Policy & Education Coordinator
Debra Hatzialexiou, Legal Services Program Manager

Audience Members

Kaethe Long, Grant & Associates
Cathy Cottingham, People Systems
Coreen Urrutia, People Systems
Patti Kacz, J. Donley & Associates

Darisa Greene, Nelco Rehabilitation
Chrissy Pierce, Favorite Associates
Anne Bornholdt, Peninsula Vocational Services
Leslie Miller, Peninsula Vocational Services
Lisa Skinner, Precisionary
Laura Kase, SCA Pacific Case Management
Jenny Gaffney, Gaffney Consulting
Sonia Stratton, Strategic Consulting

Welcome and Announcements

The VTSG meeting minutes from May 18, 2015 were reviewed and approved.

Todd Gendreau—Safety Tip

2,000, 000 home burglaries are reported each year in the United States. Examples of how it's done were presented and tips were provided how to minimize the risk of a burglary.

Ryan Guppy Announcements

RTW Partnerships re-alignment was brought about by evaluation of RTW Partnerships program after 18 months. Legislative changes were part of the driving force behind the re-alignment. The overarching goal of the re-alignment is to ensure the right people are in the right place providing the right services.

Legislative Updates: The new option 2 benefit is quickly shaping up and a new accountability agreement is being developed. Initial stages of enhanced PWP rule making has begun. We will need to have the rules in place before we know the specifics about the future role of private vocational providers

Melissa Sutherland Announcement

Return to Work Partnerships is pleased to announce Ilana Lehmann has been hired as a new Claims Vocational Service Specialist. Ilana brings a wealth of knowledge to her position. She earned a Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Education from Southern Illinois University and has a Masters in Guidance and Counseling. Ilana is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor with both academic and counselor experience. She has written three books and authored or co-authored a number of journal articles on disability and rehabilitation.

Kristine Ostler Announcement

Beginning August 1, 2015, all mileage incurred by workers for retraining purposes will be payable. This means the first and last 15 miles will no longer be deducted.

Please note the following procedure changes, effective August 1, 2015:

- For new retraining plans, use the **new** Transportation Cost Encumbrance form to request authorization for travel reimbursement. The new form:
 - Eliminates the requirement to calculate the total dollars for mileage reimbursement.
 - Continues to require that you enter the number of round trip miles traveled and the number of training days.
- For plans currently in process, if the only change is the worker's entitlement to the first and last 15 miles:
 - Do not submit a plan modification*
 - Do not submit a new Transportation Cost Encumbrance form.

*NOTE: You must submit a plan modification if the training location changes or if the worker moves.

- When the worker submits the travel voucher, the first and last 15 miles will no longer be deducted.

Donna Spencer Announcement

VRCs are asked to accurately record the "Date JA Sent to Attending Provider" and "Date of Attending Provider Review of JA" fields on the AWA progress report:

If the VRC determines it is appropriate to send the JAs to a SIMP, IME, FCE, or Work Conditioning/Work Hardening provider BEFORE they send it to the Attending Physician, please capture the date the JAs are sent to that provider in the "Date JA to Attending Provider" field on the AWA progress report.

Similarly, please capture the date that provider responds to the JAs in the "Date of Attending Provider Review of JA" field.

The VRC can send the JA to the provider most likely to know the worker's status and the Claim Manager can see that that the referral is progressing as expected.

This information is being communicated to the Claim Managers and will be posted on "What's New for Vocational Counselors". We also plan to change the language on the AWA Progress Report in the near future

Rheo Aieta Announcements

L&I strongly supports the development of resumes for injured workers. VRCs were reminded to use the new Resume Cover Sheet that was posted to the What's New page on 7/1/15.

When VRCs wish to use any non-accredited or unlicensed training programs that does not otherwise have an existing L&I provider number, the school must complete a Non-Accredited or Unlicensed Training Provider Application Supplemental Requirements form. The instructions sheet is being updated and simplified to make it easier for new training programs (usually out of state vendors) to determine whether or not to complete the application or what information is needed to obtain a provider number. More details are available on the *Becoming a Training Provider* website.

AWA Letter to IWs re meeting with VRCs—Donna Spencer

This letter is being rewritten. VTSG provided input to the following three questions

What are 3 key points that should be included in the letter?

- Why they are receiving the letter
- VRCs are a separate entity from L&I who are requested to help and participation is mandatory
- Does this mean I can't go back to my employer? What if I'm still working?
- VRC will help you RTW
- Your participation is valuable to the process
- Expect the VRC to meet within 2 weeks
- Add the firm name and phone number so the worker can call if they don't hear from the VRC

What does the worker need to do to prepare for the meeting with you?

- Enclose standard work history page
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/ClaimsIns/Voc/Referrals/AbilityAssess/Default.asp>
- Do we want the L&I letter to be a preview of our own letter?
- Employment security report attachment now on ROAs
- School transcripts, resumes
- Our own letters include comparable skills, etc.,
- Complete the intake forms that you will receive from the VRC
- Think if you have any questions for the VRC
- Share your RTW ideas with the VRC

What are worker concerns that might be addressed in the letter?

- Think about issues they have or need assistance with or concerns in order to RTW (per Jason Parker)
- \$, wages, time loss
- Not getting medical care (i.e. PT, MRI, PT etc.)
- Will be employable at a lower wage job or less meaningful work that won't support family/bills etc.
- Sometimes referred while still working

- Put headings on the letter like Benefits and Responsibilities so they can go right to their concerns
- The VRC will collaborate with your AP
- Your time loss benefits will continue during assessment
- The VRC is independent and certified—not employed by L&I

Role of Field Occupational Nurse Consultant (ONC) –Deidre Staudt

Deirdre Staudt, RN, Occupational Nurse Consultant presented “A Day in the Life of the Field Nurse.” One of 3 King County field nurses, her main focus is Early Return to Work. Additionally she works to Remove Barriers by talking with providers, claims managers, injured workers, employers, investigators, and vocational providers. She Triage Catastrophic claims with admission to Harborview Medical Center. Lastly, she provides Counseling and Education to providers, workers, and employers.

The issue of psychiatric and psycho-social conditions arising from and around industrial injuries was discussed and the group informed of the upcoming meeting to present updated Psychiatric Guidelines for potential adoption. Activity Coaching (“PGAP: Progressive Goal Attainment Program”) was discussed with information about the program shared.

Web Usability Study — Donna Spencer

The results of the May 2015 Usability Study Findings handout were reviewed. Recommendations from the Usability Study were divided into 3 tiers with the following examples:

1. In scope/quick wins
 - Delete 20 outdated pages, links, or PDFs
 - Use tabbing for contacts
 - Add temporary and permanent relocation information to plan development page
2. Longer term wins
 - Enhancements to Provider look up tool
 - Request for more sedentary to light positions
 - Reformat and re-date the 2004 WAC Guidelines
3. Out of scope
 - Have more specific imaging categories
 - Submit closure reports instead of faxing or mailing everything
 - Add a vocational rehabilitation tab to the L&I home page

Audit Reform – Rich Wilson

The department is undertaking a project to “re-imagine” the vocational audit program. We’ll be using a process similar to that recently used by our self-insurance section when they reformed their audit program. We will engage our stakeholders in the development of the new program by inviting them to be members of an advisory committee. This will include representatives from business, labor and the vocational provider community.

The framework for the new program will be consistent with an approach being taken in many other areas of L&I – to take a “tiered approach” to audit that begins with education and escalates when it is determined that desired changes are not occurring. All of these efforts are in support of L&I Goal 4 – “Helping honest workers and businesses by cracking down on the dishonest ones”. There will soon be communication about how one can apply to be on the advisory committee.