



# Job Ready Services

Job Ready Services, LLC



February 2008

## Taking Care of Our Aging Workforce

75 year old Molly works as the “sample lady” at an area grocery store. She is happy to be back at work after an injury. Work conditioning helped her to be able to lift and handle the 20 lb. table she is required to move in her job. Despite the fact she is 75 years old, Molly does not plan to retire soon, and she is not alone.

According to the Monthly Labor Review, by 2012, 19% of the workforce will be aged at least 55. From 2002, that is an increase of 10 million workers. There is evidence that suggests older workers could be relying on experience, as well as self-made accommodations to allow them to stay injury-free. However, how safe are those accommodations? One area where accommodation and experience cannot overcome, is healing after an injury. Older workers have an increased rate in days-away-from-work due to an occupational illness or injury.

So, how can we ensure the safety of our older employees and at the same time, respect their desire to continue working? At the time of hire, the most responsible thing to do is functional testing to determine if they are safe to do the job tasks and whether they have pre-existing conditions which put them at risk of injury. If they are not safe to do the job, then negating that hire is not only legal, but the only way to ensure that employee’s safety as well as others’ safety.



Older workers have an increased rate in days-away-from-work due to an occupational illness or injury.

For existing employees, **Fit for Duty testing** is a good option as part of a wellness program, or as part of your policy. Other triggers which may precipitate testing include:

- Employee is returning to work after a leave and has been released by their MD, but you are unsure of the employee’s ability to do full duty
- Employee is returning to work with a specific problem (back, knee, shoulder)
- Employee has requested an accommodation under ADA
- Medical providers need objective information for MMI
- There is reliable, objective evidence that the employee is having difficulty performing their job tasks.

Other considerations include: **Ergonomic assessments and updating job descriptions** which help to eliminate the guesswork about the physical demands of a job. **Seminars and training classes for employees** on proper body alignment and workstation set up should also be considered.

Older workers who have been loyal, hard-working employees, deserve the right to continue working as long as they are physically able to do so, but not at the cost of their health and well-being. Although a lot of us personally do not want to be working at the age of 75, Molly and increasing numbers more like her, would not agree. (Molly hugged her therapist for helping her keep her job!) Don’t we owe it to our workers to help them stay as independent and active as long as they desire? Keeping them safe on their job will help accomplish that goal and may even ensure more appreciative hugs from people like Molly.

### News and Upcoming Events

#### Annual Seminar:

**“Money Saving Practices to Maximize Employee Selection”**

Thursday, March 13, 2008  
Raleigh, NC

For more information and to register, go on our website:  
[www.jobreadyservices.net](http://www.jobreadyservices.net)  
Click on “upcoming events”

#### LUNCH & LEARN:

Thursday, Feb. 7, 2008  
12:00 pm-1:00pm

**“Neurostimulation & Chronic Pain”**

Dr. Christopher Godbout

#### CEU’s offered:

February Lunch & Learn:  
Approval pending: 1 hour of CEU for OHN’s

March Seminar-Approved for 3.5 hrs for HR Managers

#### Other Job Ready Services:

- Employment testing
- Ergonomic Assessments by a Certified Ergo Assessment Specialist
- Work conditioning
- Functional Capacity Evals
- Workplace training
- Fit for Duty Testing

**Job Ready Services, LLC**  
919-256-1400  
2300 Westinghouse Blvd  
Suite 107  
Raleigh, NC 27604  
[www.jobreadyservices.net](http://www.jobreadyservices.net)

For more information on any of these events or services, please contact Michelle Morgan:  
[michelle.morgan@jobreadyservices.net](mailto:michelle.morgan@jobreadyservices.net)