



# Job Ready Services

Job Ready Services, LLC



March 2009

## Timing is Everything

You are probably all familiar with these stats from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics regarding RTW after an injury:

Out of work for 6 months: 50% probability of RTW

Out of work for 1 year: 25% probability of RTW

Out of work for 2 years: Virtually 0 chance of RTW

Those with no lost time have the best chance of a full recovery. Add to this the average cost of a lost day: between \$3,000 & \$11,000 (salaries, lost production, profit margins, etc). Since the employer is the ultimate revenue source, they have the most to gain (or the most to lose) if an established Work Injury Management Program is in place to establish pathways that encourage early return to work. So why isn't more being done to shorten the time out of work? Many employers over the years have provided a multitude of reasons, from – "we haven't had any injuries" to "my insurance company takes care of that for me". The truth is that it only takes one injury to significantly impact costs and the insurance company needs active employer participation to reduce costs.

There are a number of steps the employer can take to reduce their costs:

- Ensure that job descriptions are up to date, truly list essential functions and clearly outline the physical demands of the job and are ADA compliant.
- Make sure job descriptions include secondary functions that can be utilized for temporary modified duty from date of injury to reduce injury exposure
- Encourage early reporting – easier to control an acute problem versus a chronic one
- Have an established medical provider pathway – costs/time out of work is greater when employee chooses provider
- Have a policy to functionally test post-injury to determine safe work parameters and provide objective information on extent of injury as it relates to job functions
- Periodically test function to objectively demonstrate improvement and reduce restrictions in the workplace

The success of a Work Injury Management Program is also dependent on the relationship of an employer to the medical providers treating their workers. Employers should seek providers who are familiar with the physical demands of their positions and understand OSHA regulations concerning first aide treatment versus a recordable injury. In North Carolina, physical therapists can evaluate and treat without a physician's referral and refer for physician evaluation if needed. Use of PTs as the first line of medical care can shorten the time between injury, treatment and return to work resulting in reduced lost time and cost savings. Establishment of a provider pathway prior to injury will provide a significant return on investment of time and money.



Many times a worker with a simple soft tissue injury such as a muscle strain can be treated with instruction in use of ice and an exercise program and need no further intervention.

### News and Upcoming Events

#### **MARCH LUNCH & LEARN**

**"Neck Injuries in the Workplace"**

**Dr. Gurvinder Deol**  
**Wake Orthopaedics**  
**Wednesday, March 25, 2009**  
**12:00 noon-1:00pm**  
**Job Ready office**  
**Approved: CCM/OHN: 1 hr**

**If you need help with getting your job descriptions up to date and designing a work injury management program—Job Ready can help!**

#### **APRIL LUNCH & LEARN:**

**Tuesday, April 14, 2009**  
**12:00pm-1:00pm**  
**"Minimally Invasive Spinal Surgery"**  
**Dr. Cary Idler**  
**Pending Approval: CCM/CRC**

**Reminder: Early referrals for Work Conditioning could return the Injured Worker to work earlier and safer than waiting to do an FCE that may very well be invalid. Work conditioning is a daily program specifically designed to return the worker to work safely. If instituted early in the medical rehab of the IW, work conditioning results in a much increased likelihood of RTW, saving \$ in worker's comp & absence costs.**

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**For more information on any of these events or services, please contact Michelle Morgan:**

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