

**Vocational Technical Stakeholders Group (VTSG)**  
**September 21, 2015**

**Announcements**

- We will not be hosting a Vocational Conference this Fall but will host a conference in the Spring of 2016
- Preferred Worker Program (PWP) draft rules and policies are currently being developed through a collaborative stakeholder process.
- The Early Ability to Work Experiment has proven successful and the Department is currently working on implementing this approach as a new standard for making AWA referrals. Two claims units will be trained each week on this new approach between now and full implementation which is scheduled for this December.
- Erin McPhee is now accepting referrals at WorkSource Renton: She was added to the vocational services contact page. Erin can be reached at: **206-477-7007**.
- New AWA referral letters to the worker and employer have been drafted for review by stakeholders.
- Some updates to increasing RTW Visibility on the Internet have already been completed. We are still working on:
  - Providing VRC access to previous claims in CAC.
  - Adding information for training programs about temporary or permanent relocation.
  - Providing a link to the SS Disability website.
- Sarah Martin is exploring an expansion of the Vendor Look-up tool--approved Providers list:
  - By county not just city
  - Separating bookstores from tools in the filter options.
  - Including companies that can provide computers.
- Volunteers were requested to contribute to updates of the transferable skills analysis guideline. If you are interested in participating contact [Spn235@LNI.wa.gov](mailto:Spn235@LNI.wa.gov).
- New unit Vocational Service Specialists includes Loren Zinder and Greg Castleberry.

- A draft charter has been completed for VRC performance audit reform. We recruited six external members for the Advisory Committee. Three were identified by IARP and IMG and three applied and were accepted. The Advisory Committee will meet monthly. The first meeting is October 26<sup>th</sup>
- Alia Kennedy was hired recently for the position of Workforce Board Liaison. She will head up a 12 month project aimed at ensuring quality retraining for injured workers. The focus will be primarily on private career schools and Alia will be working closely with the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
- The department has been working on the development of a standardized testing referral form with instruction sheet as well as a standardized testing report format with instruction sheet.
- Option 2 updates
  1. The Spanish translation of the NEW Accountability Agreement has been requested and should be available soon.
  2. Updates are completed and publication has been requested for:
    - F280-018-000 Plan Development: What are my rights & responsibilities
    - F280-019-000 Carrying Out Your Vocational Plan: Your rights and responsibilities during plan implementation

While we're waiting for publication, please use the Accountability Agreement to review Option 2 information with workers.

3. Please remind VRCs to use the new Option 1 Plan Modification Accountability Agreement when doing a plan modification.
4. We're compiling a list of Option 2 FAQs and answers. Please send your questions to [VocRehabProgram@LNI.WA.GOV](mailto:VocRehabProgram@LNI.WA.GOV). We'll post updated information on *What's New* as soon as we can.
5. The CR-102 for Option 2 rules will be filed September 22. The public hearing is October 27 at 1:00 p.m., in the auditorium here in Tumwater.
- The AWA Enhancement project was developed to create a standardized form which would increase WAC compliance and encourage standard work. Initial review of closing reports which were received in January of 2015 revealed 18% of them met WAC requirements. When volunteers piloted a new form, we

received 102 reports with an 89% WAC compliance rate. When further revisions are completed, a recommendation will be sent to executive management.

## **Agenda**

### Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE) Update—Sarah Martin

Members supported a guideline allowing to 3-5 JAs per FCE. A few more would be ok in rare cases such as a union employer who has multiple JAs/JDs that need to be considered that will help facilitate return to work. The VRC could call the FCE evaluator to discuss the unique circumstances.

A draft document of AP Concurrence was handed out providing possible questions a VRC could ask an AP instead of the concurrence question. Minor edits were made and two new questions were added based on feedback and concerns.

L&I is starting FCE evaluator training in October to expand those in the pilot who are following the new report, procedures, and testing requirements. We hope to roll it out system wide by the end of the year.

Members supported the idea of having the VRC and FCE evaluator talk before and after an FCE.

### Early AWA Update/JLARC Findings—Vickie Kennedy/Ryan Guppy

The Department has been experimenting with making AWA referrals at 60-70 days of time-loss since January 2014. This experiment has been met with great success by delivering significantly better outcomes to injured workers and employers. As a result, the Department has decided to make this early approach to making AWA's a regular part of how it makes referrals for private vocational services. Between September and December 2015, the Department will be training two claim units each week on how to make AWA referrals between 60 and 70 days of time-loss.

The Joint Legislative Review Committee recently completed an 18 month review of the Departments claims administration process. One of their recommendations was to move several of our initiatives out of pilot, or experiment phase, and into a regular part of how it administers claims. These initiatives include the Return to Work Score Pilot, which uses a predictive analytic algorithm to determine those injured workers most at risk for long term disability, and the Early Ability to Work Assessment. The Department has been working on implementing these pilots and experiments since June 2015 and September 2015 respectively.

### Goal 2 Performance Measures--Vickie Kennedy/Ryan Guppy

The Department has been tracking time-loss persistency for some time as a way to measure the overall effectiveness of operational and other efficiencies. Time-loss persistency is measured at various intervals: three months, six months, nine months, and twelve months. Over the past couple of years some of these intervals have remained relatively flat. Recently, however; we have seen positive movement in that time-loss persistency is decreasing. This trend will take additional analysis to determine which operational, or other efficiencies, are contributing most to the overall health of our system.