

**Private Sector
Vocational Technical Stakeholder Group (VTSG)
January 25, 2016 Tumwater**

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.
April Poier, Ability Vocational Consulting
Jan Veling, SCA Pacific
Todd Martin, Martin Consulting

Absent

Roselyn Blair, Strategic Consulting Services Inc.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES/RETURN TO WORK SERVICES

Attendees

Ryan Guppy, Chief of Return to Work Partnerships
Richard Wilson, RTW Partnerships Compliance Program Manager
Bill Smith, RTW Partnerships Outreach Program Manager
Rheo Aieta, Private Sector Rehabilitation Services Supervisor
Laurinda Grytness, Policy & Education Coordinator
Donna Spencer, RTW Services Management Consultant
Kristine Ostler, Vocational Service Specialist Supervisor
Melissa Sutherland, Vocational Service Specialist Supervisor
Janice Orcutt, Vocational Performance Measure Administrator
Mary McEvoy, PSRS Customer Service Specialist II

Absent

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
Terri Smock, Dura Vocational
Halla Monroy, Zale Technical
Anne Bornholdt, Peninsula Vocational Services

Leslie Miller, Peninsula Vocational Services
Earl Shimogawa, Dura Vocational
Cleo Risser, Ability Vocational Consulting
Katie Leneker, Single Handed Consulting
Ryan Manuel, Single Handed Consulting
Justin Helenius, Pacific Rehab
Michelle Barre, Vocational Rehab Services
Kari D'Aboy, D'Aboy Consulting
Casey Kilduff, Strategic Consulting
Kris Johnson, BIIAW

Welcome and Announcements

The VTSG meeting minutes from November 16, 2015 were reviewed and approved.

Rich Wilson Announcements

New hires--Janice Orcutt has returned to L&I. She will resume her role as Performance Measure Administrator. We expect to announce the hiring of the Workforce Board Liaison in the very near future. This position will head up a project designed to assess retraining deficiencies in private career schools and identify ways to address those issues.

Re-imagine Vocational Audit (RIVA)--this project has been underway since last October. The aim is to create an audit program that (1) supports vocational providers in doing the right thing and effectively addresses those who cannot or will not, and (2) is easily understood by the vocational community, stakeholders, and claim staff. The advisory committee meets monthly. There are six vocational counselors on the advisory committee. The group has already identified and received approval for the following quick wins:

- Communication - Begin a complaint investigation with a telephone call to the person that the complaint is against to possibly get resolution and to inform on process.
- Allow providers to submit electronic case notes instead of paper to reduce costs and waste.
- -Use the web to provide comprehensive information about the audit and complaint processes including training on complaint and audit lessons learned. Use the web to provide specific training modules on service delivery.

The group is currently focused on “what services and outcomes matter most” and “quality and effectiveness”. The ideas include both current and emerging best practices. Our next steps will be to work with the committee to bucket and prioritize the list, identify ways that we can communicate/train on those expectations, and build the audit program to ensure those services are happening.

Donna Spencer Announcements

IARPS standard JA-- The IARPS standard JA was recently updated on the Forms Website. An announcement was placed on What's New.

Spring Conference--We've started planning for Spring Conference. Please send ideas to the mailbox: LNI RE Voc Rehab Program. We've received several requests to hear about the new labor market survey process. We may put together a panel of external and internal providers. We also want to provide an ethics credit.

Previous claims--a service request has been approved to provide vocational providers with access to previous claims. We don't have an implementation date yet but we are getting closer to being able to provide this information.

Laurinda Grytness Announcement

Option 2 rulemaking update—The rules adoption form (CR-103) was filed January 19, 2016. The rules are effective February 19, 2016. Status of L&I's publications with updated Option 2 information has been posted on *What's New*.

Kristine Ostler Announcement

Option 2 dates--Beginning the date the department approves the plan, or the date of a determination that the plan is valid following a dispute, through completion of the first academic quarter or three months' training, the worker may elect option 2.

For a private or career school, three months' of training would be equal to the start date of the plan plus 90 days. The worker has 15 days beyond that date, to select Option 2. For public schools on the academic quarter system, the last day the worker could take a final exam is considered the last day of the quarter. The worker has 15 days to beyond the last day of finals to select option 2.

The department may approve an election for option 2 benefits that was submitted in writing within twenty-five days of the end of the first academic quarter or three months' training if the worker provides a written explanation establishing that he or she was unable to submit his or her election of option 2 benefits within fifteen days. If you have questions regarding whether a worker's election of option 2 is timely, contact the unit VSS.

Still pending is information regarding vocational closure when option 2 is selected after retraining has started.

Melissa Sutherland Announcement

Plan submission--Even though there has been a change to when the Option 2 selection can be made, we still ask VRCs to submit training plans at least 30 days prior to the start of a training program

Rheo Aieta Announcement

.Voice mail quick access guide—this user guide is intended for frequent callers. You can press the numbers immediately to bypass the prompts and speed up the menu.

- Press 1, after the tone say the *claim number*. Press 3 to save recording.
- Press 2 to bypass the social security field
- After the tone say your first and last name and press the #key. Press 3 to save the recording.
- Enter your phone number including the area code and extension followed by the #key. Press 1 to confirm the numbers.
- Press 2 to enter the relationship to claim (Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor).
- Wait for the tone, leave a detailed message and press the # key. Press 3 to save the message.

Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE) Update—Sarah Martin

We will be posting updated resource documents to help answer questions about new expectations/processes for vocational providers with FCEs. Project timeline has been extended thru July 2016. By March, we hope to implement the new Summary Report form by March used by FCE evaluators. This summary form is meant to answer the necessary questions for the AP to make RTW decisions. It is the document we want sent to L&I, AP and VRC within 10 days. The full report also sent to L&I is due within 30 days. New resources for VRCs includes:

- Questionnaire to the AP post FCE to replace asking for concurrence based on prior feedback by VTSG.
- Resources when the FCE evaluator is unable to make RTW decisions.

Preferred Worker Program update—Vickie Kennedy

Benefit changes for preferred workers certified on or after January 1, 2016:

- Eligible employers may receive benefits similar to the Stay at Work program. Eligible employers may submit reimbursement requests for wages, clothing, equipment, and tools allowing the worker to return to work at a medically-approved job. The employer can't be reimbursed for clothing, equipment or tools that are normally provided to employees. These reimbursement requests will be processed by adjudicators in the Stay at Work Program.
- The employer of injury (EOI) can be eligible for PWP.
- Reduced or eliminated premiums for eligible employers who hire preferred workers. Eligibility begins on the date the preferred worker is hired at the medically-approved job and continues for 36 consecutive months.

- Confirmation that the work is within the worker's restrictions must be made by both the worker's health care provider and a vocational rehabilitation professional. The final determination will be made by the department's vocational services specialist (VSS).
- Self-insured employers are only eligible for the PWP incentives if they hire a preferred worker who is certified as a preferred worker under a state fund claim.

WAC & Policy revisions are anticipated for Spring 2016. More details will follow. Feel free to refer questions about the program to the Preferred Worker desk at (360)902-6758 or 1-800-845-2634.

ADM1/Fee Cap update--Ryan Guppy

The Department is actively exploring strategies to continue to align private sector vocational services, with agency goals, while removing as many barriers as possible. A plan is currently being developed to encourage the continuation of return to work services through periods of medical recovery (aka "medical instability") while facing the challenge of fee cap restrictions during an Ability to Work Assessment. A What's New announcement is anticipated by the end of February.

Testing Referral and Testing Report Forms—Rheo Aieta and Ilana Lehman

Draft documents for testing referrals and testing reports were distributed for review and discussion before the implementation of a pilot project to standardize testing services.

Feedback was solicited regarding questions about the forms and suggestions for missing or additional information.

Implementation of the pilot project has been deferred pending the department's further review of the VTSG feedback and edits to the draft documents..