



SNA 2, SNA 3 and 4 Vocational Recommendations



- Barb Mickelson
 - Pension Adjudicator
 - Department of Labor and Industries
 - 360-902-4938
- Laura Farley
 - Pension Adjudicator
 - Department of Labor and Industries
 - 360-902-6217





SNA 2, SNA 3 and 4 Vocational Recommendations

- SNA 2- Services Not Appropriate Due Solely from Injury or Occupational Disease
- SNA 3- Services Not Appropriate Due to Unaccepted Conditions/Factors
 - ‘Post Injury’
- SNA 4- Services Not Appropriate Due to Injury or Occupational Disease & Pre-existing Conditions (mental and/or physical)
- Not SNA 4 if Injury or Occupational Disease alone causes inability to work





SNA 2, SNA 3 and 4 Vocational Recommendations



- Objectives
 - Understand why we are here today
 - Explain the importance of pre-injury and post-injury conditions in assessing employability/ability to benefit
 - Recognize what analysis is needed when recommending that vocational services are not appropriate



What Have We Noticed:

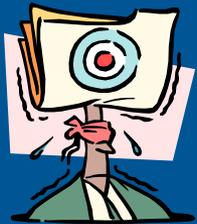


- SNA 2
 - Confusion between pre-existing and post-injury conditions
 - Lack of documentation of conditions
 - Incomplete analysis of employability regardless of conditions
- SNA 4
 - Pre-existing factors rather than conditions



Employability Considerations- Law

- ***Fochtman v. Labor and Industries* (1972)**
 - Requires study of whole person
 - Pre-existing conditions, age, education, training, experience, reaction to injury, other relevant factors
 - Vocational opinion relevant
 - When based upon medical opinion of limitations





Employability Considerations- Law

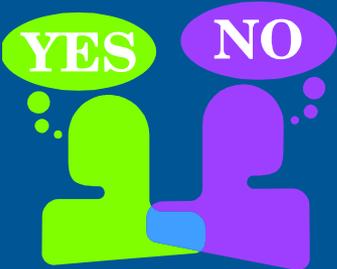
- *Wendt v. Labor and Industries* (1977)
 - “Combined effects”
 - Worker permanently disabled when the injury combines with unrelated, pre-existing **disabling** condition(s) as they existed at the time of injury





Employability Considerations- Rule

- Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 296-19A-010(1)
- Employable considers:
 - Pre-existing physical and mental limitations
 - *as they existed at the time of the industrial injury/occupational disease*





Employability Considerations- Rule

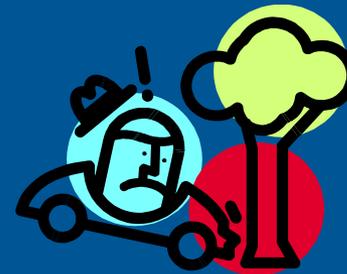
- **WAC 296-19A-010(1)**
- Employable does not consider:
 - Physical and/or mental conditions that arose after the industrial injury/occupational disease





SNA 3 “Unaccepted Conditions”

- Generally ‘post-injury’
- Common examples:
 - Post injury motor vehicle accident
 - Post injury illness
 - Post injury progression of pre-existing condition





SNA 4 “Combined Effects”

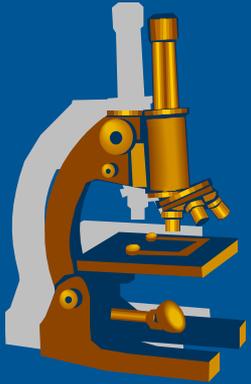
- Industrial injury and pre-existing conditions
 - ‘factors’ removed from recommendation
 - Age
 - Education
 - Training
 - Experience
 - Labor market
 - Aptitudes
 - Lack of Driver’s License
 - Incarceration
 - Monolingual





SNA 4 “Combined Effects”

- Analysis should include:
 - What the pre-existing conditions are, and their impact at the time of injury or disease
 - Is there documentation?
 - Were they truly disabling at time of injury?
 - How the pre-existing conditions contribute to the inability to work or be retrained





SNA 4 “Combined Effects”

- Analysis should include:
 - Based on injury alone, what could the worker do or be retrained to do?
 - Approved JA
 - Positive labor market survey
 - Documentation of training mechanism





Is It Really Combined Effects?

- Yes- if pre-existing, disabling conditions are present
- No- if only pre-existing factors are present
- Only recommend SNA 4 when true combined effects





FAQ - 1

- What are the criteria for a SNA 4 closure?
 - Injury/occupational disease in and of itself does not make the IW TPD
 - Combination of pre-existing disabling condition(s) combined with the injury/occupational disease make the IW TPD
 - Factors, such as age, labor market, monolingual, etc., are excluded as conditions in the SNA 4 recommendation



FAQ - 2

- What conditions are excluded in considering a SNA 4 closure?
 - Post-injury disabling conditions and the natural progression of medical conditions identified at date of injury and not disabling are excluded



FAQ - 3

- When are preexisting conditions considered in a SNA4 closure?
 - When medical evidence documents a pre-existing condition has limitations. Also, if the employer can document they accommodated a known pre-existing disabling condition



FAQ - 4

- Under what conditions are preexisting conditions excluded from consideration from a SNA4 closure?
 - They were not disabling to the worker or a factor in the worker's day-to-day activities



FAQ - 5

- Are mental, psychiatric and physical preexisting conditions included for consideration for a SNA4 closure? E.g., Borderline mental retardation, Depression, and Back injury which limits IW to the Sedentary strength level
 - Yes. We look at odd lot employment or if the employer modified the job to accommodate a worker's mental capacity or an organic/physical condition



FAQ - 6

- What types of documentation are acceptable to establish the existence of a preexisting condition? E.g., IME, AP letter, physician consult, family doctor report?
 - Medical records from all sources
 - Statement made by a clinician supported by medical records
 - Employer's documentation of job modification
 - Prior claims where limitations affected return to work at a lesser physical capacity