



Vocational **Rehabilitation**

Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc Rehab) is one of four strategic, custom-built return-to-work programs available to employers. It is an essential element in the workers' compensation and managed care benefits for employees. Programs like Voc Rehab can help employers maintain control over claims by directing their employees to great occupational healthcare.

How the program works

Voc Rehab is designed to be an option for injured employees when other return-to-work efforts are exhausted or when the injuries are so severe that the employee will not be able to return to their original position. A Voc Rehab program involves a Qualified Rehabilitation Professional meeting personally with the employee to develop a specific plan to accomplish a work-related goal, such as return to the same job, return to a different job, same/different employer, etc.

A claim may move into Voc Rehab when the employer can no longer accommodate the modified duty requirements. The decision to move to Voc Rehab from transitional duty is agreed upon by all parties, including the employer, employee, managed care organization (MCO), field case manager, therapist and physician. A claim may also move to Voc Rehab when an injured employee was never released to transitional duty. The lost time claim is a candidate for Voc Rehab when the MCO determines it is feasible. The employer, employee and physician approve the program.

The costs associated with Voc Rehab, including lost-time compensation (living maintenance), are covered by the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation's Surplus Fund and *are not* charged to the employer's risk. Voc Rehab can be a powerful recovery strategy when used wisely, but the timing can be sensitive.

It is critical to work closely with the Nurse Case Manager and employee to initiate Voc Rehab at the optimal point in the recovery process to realize the greatest possible value.

Programs like Voc Rehab can help keep employers involved and aware of the injured employee's medical condition and the care they need. They can also help maintain the employee's morale and confidence in their employer's plan to help them deal with their injury and preserve their job.

Implementing a Voc Rehab program

For CompManagement Health Systems' (CHS) clients, their Account Executive and Nurse Case Manager are knowledgeable allies who can help them determine if a Voc Rehab program is right for their organization. They can also help incorporate it into existing employee benefit programs. The specific utilization will vary widely based on the actual circumstances of each claim.

A Voc Rehab program can be implemented for clients on a case-by-case basis.

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