Workers' Comp

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Catastrophic Case Management

Meet Nicole Hurley, RN, BSN, CDMS

With more than 20 years' experience in case management, Nicole Hurley, RN, BSN, CDMS, is the case manager whom carriers and adjusters trust to ensure injured workers receive the best care in a timely manner. Below is an example of how Ms. Hurley helped an injured worker with life-threatening injuries reach his highest functional potential.

The Case

A workplace explosion blasted the employee down an elevator shaft and slammed him to the bottom, causing fractures to his skull, face, hip and leg. As if things couldn't get worse, sulfuric acid had pooled at his landing spot, causing significant chemical burns to his back and left shoulder. Miraculously, the worker survived, but he sustained life-threatening injuries requiring multiple surgical procedures and extensive rehabilitation. The man also incurred a traumatic brain injury from the accident which caused moderate memory issues and had developed cataracts due to the significant chemical burns to his eyes.

Case Management Impact

With her experience in dealing with complex work injuries, Ms. Hurley was chosen to manage this highly involved case. Though the worker's injuries were so catastrophic that return-to-work career paths were not an option, Ms. Hurley developed an excellent working relationship with him and his family to guide him toward independent living. Her close collaboration with the multiple care providers involved in the case, calmed the claimant's family members who were distraught and overwhelmed by the extensive injuries and rehabilitation plan. To facilitate treatment protocol compliance, Ms. Hurley created an appointment calendar with the injured worker and his mother to develop a system they could easily understand and follow.

Outcome

Through two years of long-term rehabilitation, boosted by Hurley’s diligent attention and communication with providers and family, the injured worker is now ambulating on his own with the assistance of a quad cane for long distances. He requires minimal assistance with activities of daily living, and though his injuries were catastrophic, Hurley’s efforts allowed the injured worker to be discharged from all care except his vision provider, resulting in a documented cost savings of $98,200. The claimant is no longer taking pain medication, and his pharmaceutical treatment is minimal.

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