Workers' Comp

Getting It Right Makes All the Difference

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Telephonic Case Management

Diana Zellerman, RN, BSN, CCM

As a telephonic case manager for Genex the past five years, Dianna Zellerman has mastered the ability to overcome one of the biggest challenges a non-field case manager faces in working with injured employees: establishing trust. This critical skill made all the difference in ensuring this injured woman received the right medical treatment to return to work.

The Case

A 47-year-old paraprofessional slipped and fell on an icy pavement, injuring her right foot. While X-rays showed no evidence of fracture or dislocation, the woman still experienced severe pain. She was placed on stringent light-duty restrictions that her employer was unable to accommodate.

Case Management Impact

Once assigned to the case, Zellerman compared the treatment plan with guidelines and projected duration of disability. When the employee expressed concerns regarding her diagnosis, restrictions, treatment recommendations and overall care received from occupational medicine, Zellerman worked with her to develop a return-to-work plan and, in collaboration with the resolution manager, decided to transfer care to an orthopedic specialist. The physician immediately recommended an urgent MRI to rule out Achilles tendon rupture and confirmed diagnosis of tendinitis. These efforts enabled Zellerman to establish trust with the injured paraprofessional, who remained responsive to the case manager and compliant to the care plan.

Outcome

Zellerman assisted with communicating the injured employee’s updated work status to the employer to ensure timely return to light duty when it was previously not available. Through these collaborative efforts and timely

referrals, the injured worker was able to return to light duty and was subsequently placed at maximum medical improvement soon after. This resulted in only 17 days lost time compared to the projected estimated length of disability of 158 days.

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