Workers' Comp

Experience Saves a Life & a Career

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field Case Management

Meet Deborah Buckley, RN, BS

A case manager for 25 years, Deborah Buckley, RN, BS, continually demonstrates her innate ability to address the total impact of illness and injury including psychological, physical and social needs to help injured workers return to their livelihoods.

The Case

A bourbon warehouse worker sustained an injury when his right leg became lodged between two barrels. He was taken to a local ER where initial X-rays were negative. Pain persisted, however, and the man was referred to an occupational medicine clinic where he was diagnosed with decreased peripheral circulation. He was then transferred to a critical care hospital and diagnosed with compartment syndrome of the right leg and scheduled for an immediate surgical procedure designed to relieve pressure and increase circulation.

Case Management Impact

Buckley was assigned to the case, and quickly ensured the surgeon performed the procedure which would yield the best results. Despite successful surgery, the claimant developed complications, including a serious bone infection, which required multiple procedures with subsequent loss of muscle and tendon function in the right leg. Buckley identified the best wound care provider and then coordinated with the treating physician to develop a home health care protocol. She worked with the home health team by attending visits so that the man’s wife and daughter could perform wound dressings at home. As the man’s wounds healed, Buckley researched the medical community for the best orthopedic surgeon to consult on how to treat the man’s muscle and tendon damage. She found a specialist who performed a posterior tibial tendon transfer which helped restore muscle function. During rehab, the claimant sustained overuse syndrome on the left knee with subsequent meniscal tear and had to undergo arthroscopic repair. Buckley helped coordinate the surgery and ensured the claimant was referred to a functional physical therapy program.

Outcome

Buckley proceeded to coordinate a work conditioning program with the employer and initiated a modified duty plan which allowed the employee to return to work at an earlier date. He subsequently transitioned to full duty and was recently promoted to a supervisory position. Buckley’s case management intervention allowed the injured worker to thrive after incurring a potentially life-threatening injury.

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