Workers' Comp

Introducing Networks 2.0: Part Three

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The best companies want workers back on the job

Payers and the companies they represent are eager to get injured workers back on their feet and back on the job. Many of these companies represent the heavyweights of corporate America. Major employers like manufacturers, large retailers, and airlines rely on comprehensive return-to-work programs to help their injured employees recover. The best programs do far more than safeguard the bottom line. They focus on truly addressing the needs of injured workers themselves. That's because the longer workers are away, the less likely it is they will return to the workplace. The New York State Workers' Compensation Board has broken down some statistics, and reports that there is only a 50 percent chance that an injured employee will return to work after a six-month absence. That drops to a 25 percent chance following a one-year absence. After two years away, the likelihood a worker will return plunges to a 1 percent chance. These figures underscore the importance of helping injured workers return to the job. Those who are out of work longer face greater risks from an array of challenges that include social isolation and depression in addition to financial stress to loss of skills and medical complications resulting from potentially being forced into a more sedentary lifestyle. Top companies understand that having a worker return to the job either under modified duty or, if possible, full duty, is the best outcome for workers and for business. Therefore, these employers offer fair reimbursements to providers and pay on time. That's because top-tier employers recognize the irreplaceable value providers bring. Alongside employers and payers, providers are part of a three-legged stool that helps injured workers return to the job. This rewarding role is what helps set marquee workers' comp networks apart; it's the shared focus on return-to-work that is essential to a patient's ultimate success. The focus on functionality — getting someone back on their feet and back to their daily life — fits well with most providers' sense of purpose in the care they give. The empirical threshold of whether someone makes it back to work and to proper function is also an important one because successful return to modified or full duty affords employees the chance to earn a full paycheck. That's important to workers, of course. The National Safety Council, a nonprofit chartered by Congress, estimated that in 2017 the average cost per worker following an injury on the job totaled $1,100. This includes expenses the worker faced to help offset the cost of work injuries. This paper is based on articles originally published by WorkCompWire on October 29, 2019 and November 5, 2019.

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