

**MANAGEMENT LABOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SUBCOMMITTEE
Thursday, February 19, 2004
Labor and Industries Building, Conference Room F**

Subcommittee Members Present:

Ken Hector, CNF Service Company, Portland, OR
Diane Janzen, NorPac Foods, Lake Oswego, OR
John Kirkpatrick, IUPAT District Council #5, Portland, OR
Mike O'Rourke, Plumbing and Steamfitters UA 290, Tualatin, OR
Bob Shiprack, Oregon Building Trades Council, Tualatin, OR
Sheri Sundstrom, Hoffman Construction Company, Portland, OR

Staff Present:

Nancy Bieber, Workers Compensation Division
Barbara Smith, Workers' Compensation Division
Teri Bledsoe, Director's Office
Mike Manley, Information Management Division
Lou Savage, Director's Office
John Shilts, Workers Compensation Division
Travis Wall, Injured Workers Ombudsman

REVIEW MINUTES FROM DECEMBER SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Chairperson Sheri Sundstrom called the Vocational Rehabilitation Subcommittee meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

Chairperson Sundstrom made an opening statement to all in attendance to clear up any misunderstandings about the intent of the MLAC subcommittee regarding the Vocational Rehabilitation program. At the Eugene meeting, there seemed to be some concern that MLAC was thinking about big changes to vocational rehabilitation. That is not the goal of MLAC or the Vocational Rehabilitation Subcommittee. The Vocational Rehabilitation Subcommittee is hoping at this meeting to come to a clearer understanding of the issues the subcommittee wants to explore with respect to vocational rehabilitation system.

Bob Shiprack moved to accept the December 16, 2003 meeting minutes as submitted. Ken Hector seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

Nancy Bieber, Workers Compensation Division, summarized for the subcommittee the program evaluation model used to review return-to-work programs that was developed by the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) as part of its regulatory streamlining initiative. This model evaluated the cost and benefits of programs, as well as whether government is the appropriate or best entity to administer or regulate the programs. A written program evaluation overview, which contains the key elements and questions, was provided to the subcommittee.

Background and evaluation highlights of the three following programs were given by Nancy and written summaries were also provided:

- Employer-at-Injury Program (EAIP)
- Preferred Worker Program (PWP)
- Vocational Assistance Program

Over the last few years, there have been fewer people using their benefits. Nancy mentioned that staff is working on information packets for this program to try to increase program usage. Drafts of marketing materials were provided to the subcommittee.

CUSTOMER SURVEY REPORTS

Barbara Smith, Workers Compensation Division, summarized the Return-To-Work (RTW) Customer Surveys. Written survey results and a summary were provided to the subcommittee. The following surveys were administered:

- Vocational Consultant Survey
- Injured Workers Who Used RTW Programs
- Employers Who Have Recently Used RTW Programs
- Injured Workers Who Didn't Use RTW Programs
- Employers Who Haven't Used RTW Programs

DISCUSSION OF OPTIONS

Staff provided written ideas of options that various people have suggested for vocational assistance. There is a clear need to figure out how to make the system work better, to integrate programs, and have the provision of services to be consistent. There is nothing that assists people in making use of more than one program.

The subcommittee decided they needed to review these options and then have a work session on Wednesday, March 3, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Mr. Scott Wroot — Submitted written testimony.

Mr. John Glagin — Mr. Glagin is an injured worker and also vocational counselor. He thanked the subcommittee for the opportunity to speak. When Mr. Glagin became injured he went through the system, was referred to a company for assistance and went through training. If it were not for the assistance he received from his vocational counselor, he would not be where he is now. Mr. Glagin has heard that the vocational counseling services might be disbanded and does not want to see this happen. He stressed that injured workers need to be aware of training programs that are available and receive assistance with options when a CDA is offered.

Mr. Larry Dug — Mr. Dug is an injured worker and feels that one of the biggest reasons people do not get involved with vocational rehabilitation programs is because their employers do not give them a chance to come back to work. Mr. Dug was injured on the job and worked with a vocational counselor. Because of the programs offered to injured workers, he was able to go to school and get back to work. Mr. Dug expressed his gratitude for the program and how it helped him to continue in the work force. He mentioned the importance of getting the program information out to employers and how valuable these programs are to injured workers. He received much more through vocational rehabilitation than he would have from a settlement. Mr. Dug did experience a two year period of time when he did not do anything and wished he could have spent that time going to school.

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Kenneth Knudson — Mr. Knudson was an injured worker who went through the training program He has been successful in learning a trade and finding another job. Mr. Knudson suggested that people should not be offered a lump sum settlement and should only be offered training.

Chairperson Sundstrom thanked those who testified before the subcommittee and said that it is helpful to hear about success stories. It was suggested that the subcommittee hear from a group of injured workers who have not had success going through the system.

The subcommittee scheduled a work session for Wednesday, March 3, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.