

Return to Work Success Stories

Although we recognize that return to work success occurs because of a variety of causes, we have found that there is one common theme among all successes – communication. The Standard’s Return to Work team will work as a coordinator between your company, the member, the health provider and the worker’s compensation carrier to ensure that all are aware of what the goal is.

Many times we have found that an employee who is not at work is not there because the employer is not aware of their capabilities, the employee is not aware that work is available or there is a misconception regarding the possibilities of even bringing that employee back to work within limitations and restrictions. The majority of our returns to work successes are not complex. We act as a return to work conduit, reviewing every claim where return to work may be possible – our follow-up may be as simple as a few telephone calls that result in coordination of a start date, contact to a physician’s office to clarify restrictions or ordering a simple ergonomic device. These things are often completed in a day. Other successes do take more time and the stories outlined below show what happens when all parties, through a coordinated effort, work together toward the common goal of successful return to work.

Return to Work Success Story #1

Occupation: Early Warning Systems Analyst

Situation: Ceased work due to cardiac problems, a multiple bypass surgery, renal failure, an above the knee amputation, and loss of vision in one eye. The employee was determined to return to work and his employer was just as determined to have him return.

Return to Work Intervention: Employer relocated his office to a ground floor and offered part time work at the office on classified projects or at home on non-classified projects. The Standard’s Return to Work Team coordinated the purchase of a motorized wheelchair, vehicle lift for the chair, and new glasses to accommodate the employee’s vision problems in his one remaining eye.

Outcome: The employee began working part-time and with the accommodation gradually returned to work full-time.

Return to Work Success Story #2

Occupation: Operations Research Analyst

Situation: Ceased work due a diagnosis of lumbar disc displacement w/ radiculopathy at L5-S1. He also has neck pain that radiates down his left upper extremity. He required an ambulatory cane and continued with steroid injections. He was only able to work four hours a day.

Intervention: The Standard's Return to Work Team coordinated an ergonomic assessment and provided a new chair, ergonomic keyboard, keyboard tray. After approximately 6 weeks of the employee utilizing his new chair and other adaptive equipment he was able to return to work on a full time basis.

Return to Work Success Story #3

Occupation: Chemist

Situation: Ceased work due to major depressive disorder, recurrent, severe without psychosis and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder NOS.

Intervention: The Standard's Return to Work Team contacted his employer and his clinician to develop a Return to Work Plan. In working with the employer, The Standard found out that the employer was concerned about their employee's condition and ability to perform the work. However, they were also very supportive of him as an employee and wanted to give him a chance to succeed. They gave him access to other Chemist openings and hired him for a bench Chemist job working on a less hectic shift, third shift.

Outcome: He was allowed a graduated return to work and did successfully return to full-time work.

Return to Work Success Story #4

Occupation: QA Food Specialist

Situation: Cervical Fusion with limited bending of the neck when testing food products.

Intervention: Given the employee's lack of forward bending at the neck, The Standard Return to Work Team worked with the employer and employee to research a magnifying device that would allow positioning of the employee's neck in a neutral posture. The Standard purchased a Mantis Stereo Magnifier that allowed the employee to work without bending her neck.

Outcome: The employee returned to work and is able to tolerate the demands of the job.