

University 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 the university, 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 return 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 four 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

52 year old Assistant to the Chancellor who ceased work due to right rotator cuff surgery. The Standard’s Return to Work Team identified the employee for potential RTW Services. The Standard obtained current work restrictions and working with it’s employer partner with a large university and coordinated an ergonomic assessment. The Standard coordinated the purchase and installation of an ergonomic Varitask XR Electric Sit Stand Table. The employee successfully returned to work.

Return to Work Success Story #2

40 year old associate dean who ceased work due to right shoulder spurs which interfered with the tendon. The Standard’s Return to Work Team was contacted by the university as a Stay at Work Prevention Claim. The Standard working with the university RTW partnership program assisted the employee with her workstation. Given the nature of her job, worked at a large wooden desk. Given the desk size, the employee had difficulty using her computer. The Standard coordinated an ergonomic assessment and recommendations were made to provide for a small adjustable computer work table that allows a better positioning of her arms and shoulders at neutral posture. The Standard coordinated the equipment order and the workstation was ordered. Potential loss time could have resulted in six more weeks off of work.

Return to Work Success Story #3

A 30 year old Direct Service Program Coordinator that ceased work due to complications from child birth and later had major post-partum depression. The Standard’s Return to Work Team worked with a field nurse case manager given the complexity of the case. The nurse case manager provided direct support to the employee and working with her doctor, she obtained work restrictions for a part-time return to work. The nurse case manager coordinated the university’s supervisor and human resources to assist her in this

employee's return to work efforts. The employee was initially released for 3 days a week and had made a successful full duty return to work.

Return to Work Success Story #4

An English Professor ceased work due to cervical and back fusion. The employee was reviewed by The Standard's Return to Work Team for return to work and vocational intervention. The employee was interested in returning to work.

The Standard's Return to Work Team contacted the university who was open for her return to work despite her restrictions. The Standard's Return to Work Team negotiated with the university to provide her with a student aide in the classroom, assistance going to and from her vehicle, and being provided with a data projector to allow her to sit while lecturing. The Standard coordinated these accommodations with her department. The Standard provided the employee with an ergonomic chair with cervical and lumbar support, laptop and book desk slants to eliminate downward neck flexion and forearm supports to reduce bilateral forearm discomfort. The Standard coordinated delivery of the ergonomic equipment and provided the employee with a specialist to set up her equipment and arrange her classroom. She recently completed her first semester of teaching and sent The Standard's Return to Work Team a thank you note that said, *"I am so grateful to be back at work with my students and doing a job that I love."*

