

**Private Sector Vocational Technical Stakeholder Group  
September 25, 2018 — Tukwila**

***VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROVIDERS***

**Attendees**

April Poier, Ability Vocational Consulting  
Heidi Trisler-Ballew, Sound Vocational  
Cherie Smith, Vocational Connections Inc.  
Sybil Evans, SCA Pacific Case Management  
Earl Shimogawa, Dura Vocational Services  
Leslie Miller, Peninsula Vocational Services  
Leslie Weaver, Disability Management Consulting  
Sandra Holman, Strategic Consulting  
Ken Smith, Rainier Case Management, Inc.  
Laurel Creek, Rainier Case Management, Inc./Vocational Options  
Craig Bock, Bock Consulting  
Robert Gaffney, Gaffney Consulting

**Absent**

None

***DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRIES/RETURN TO WORK SERVICES***

**Attendees**

Ryan Guppy, RTW Partnerships Chief  
Erin Moncada, PSRS Supervisor  
Melissa Sutherland, Vocational Service Specialist Supervisor  
Kristine Ostler, Vocational Service Specialist Supervisor  
Lauren Royer, Administrative Assistant  
Richard Wilson, Private Sector Compliance Manager  
Coral Macy, VDRO Supervisor  
Janice Orcutt, Vocational Performance Measure Administrator  
Debra Hatzialexiou, Legal Services Program Manager  
Amanda Fisher, RTWP Operations Manager  
Lara Drabek, Vocational Service Specialist Supervisor  
Erich Hahn, Management Analyst

**Absent**

None

## Welcome and Announcements

**Safety topic:** Pet Awareness – The legalization of marijuana has had consequences for pets because people aren't concealing their use of it. For example, if you're on a fall hike, be aware that marijuana can be on the trail from someone there before you, and small flakes can be easily ingested by pets. Signs to watch for include lethargy, "bobble-head" effect, and slowed breathing.

Erin: Hire announcement: Karlie Cherniske, new CSS2, her email is [CHEK235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:CHEK235@lni.wa.gov)

Erin: We're accepting applications for one new at-large member.

Lara: Following up from the last VTSG; the encumbrance form modifications. There will be a pilot group starting in October. Updates on this pilot at the next VTSG.

Kristine: For the most up to date Claims Units assignment go to our website under the 'contact us' section.

Janice: With regard to progress report issues where the system was not updating, a fix was implemented in August. Let Janice know if you are still experiencing issues.

Rich: Fall L&I Vocational Conference is November 2<sup>nd</sup>

Sandra: IARP will have a conference at Suncadia 9-3pm, this Thursday.

## What's New with What's New

Group reviewed the newest posts on What's New.

## VRP Update

Ryan provided a high-level summary of the Voc Recovery Project to date. The next steps in the project will collapse the six workgroups into two 'super groups' consisting of 20 people, meeting once a month. The goal is to make the meetings as efficient as possible. The Voc Recovery Pilot and the Education/ Best Practices Workstreams will not be folded into the super groups and remain separate. Reminder that the 'Voc Recovery Tab' has an overview of the project along with resources and contact information.

**Survey** – Janice, Erich, and Wayne are gathering data through a survey to collect data that is not available using L&I's data warehouse.

## VTSG – 2019 Changes

Given the amount of stakeholdering with VRP, we would like to reduce the amount of meetings for VTSG to quarterly versus every other month. The meeting time will remain the same.

## Vocational Services and Option 2 Benefits

Rich provided an overview of the Option 2 benefit. The group separated into four smaller groups to participate in an exercise led by Janice on the underutilization of Option 2's 10% benefit use.

### Question 1: Why are injured worker's not using this benefit?

#### Group 1

- Haven't finished spending PPD
- RTW
- Aversion to Voc/L&I
- Worker doesn't understand benefit, lack of info
- Alternative resources (Worksource)
- Outdoors workers – Classrooms
- Worker already knows how
- Language barriers

#### Group 2

- We forget that they have Opt 2 benefits including 10%
- Who to contact? (IW and VRC)
- Knowledge about 10% for VRCs unclear. Keep track after Opt 2 is taken? Marketing?
- IW didn't know they could select VRC
- Continuation/reminders to IW re: Opt 2 benefits once you take opt 2. (Marketing! Letters, reminders, Worksource VSS)
- More info about approved providers vs. how/where to use funds for IW
- Workers think they are 'done' with L&I

#### Group 3

- Experience/exposure/interaction w/L&I and VRC
- Misunderstanding benefit
- VRC's aren't pushing it, It's new!
- Payment to VRCs is not sufficient so they aren't promoting it wo workers. No travel either. SI pays travel.
- They (worker) is already working???
- Bills are being denied, not promoting and worker's not accessing.

#### Group 4

- Worker has a job
- IW thinking short term and not globally - \$ from PPD and Voc Award – 9 months
- IW is not clear on next steps

- IW is done with system
- VRCs don't know the process
- Plan already written/approved for their use
- AWA/PD – Saturated with information already

**Question 2: What are some possible solutions?**

Group 1

- Meet with worker when Opt 2 selected
- More information materials re opt 2
- Fix billing issues
- Fund follow up with worker after opt 2
- Opt 2 code for VRCs with Option 2 EVOC
- Refer worker to job fairs

Group 2

- Reminder outreach from L&I: Letters, marketing, calls, etc.
- Workshops on Opt 2 by L&I = At Worksource, L&I, or geo areas?
- No OJT in Opt 2 but occupational skills training through Portland CC?
  - -Knowledge = L&I
  - -Marketing = VRC
- Searchable list for VRCs (geo area) available to IW's, Worksource, etc.
- Dept could help market and sign up more OCC. Skills training vendors like Portland CC
- ESL and or/translation services for assistance (VRC using translation services).

Group 3

- Provide list of VRCs to worker
- Firms could identify 'core' group to do this (administer the benefit) and/or follow up with worker
- Don't close vocational services for 2 months
- Clean up billing issues
- L&I can get info out better to worker/firm - "Market"
- Dept can notify and contact worker post closure
- Let worker know about benefit when plan signing occurs
- If worker selects 'option 2' they can utilize anytime within time frame- even on a new claim

Group 4

- Re-contact after 6 months by Opt 2 selection and then every 6 months with a countdown to available funds

- Provide concrete examples of how the funds could be used. What types of jobs?
- L&I increase marketing/communication to workers
- Job fairs sponsored by L&I to bring in vendors
- L&I publishes a document with option 2 benefits and how to use the 10% to hire a VRC

**Question 3: What are some ideas for leveraging conference time to increase utilization?**

Group 2

- Give real world examples (it's a contract) (SI?)
- Reassure – billing issues fixed
- VRC shares example
- Basic training on Opt 2 (overview) and how to bill
- Resources on how to bill
- Scenario of how it could be used

Group 1, 3, and 4

\*No information available?\*