



Return-to-Work (RTW) Strategies: Washington's COHE Model National Online Dialogue

**March 7, 2017 – March 18, 2017
Final Report**



S@W/R2W
Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work
POLICY COLLABORATIVE

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Introduction

The following report outlines the results of the ePolicyWorks' online dialogue, "RTW Strategies: Washington's COHE Model" hosted by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work (SAW/RTW) Policy Collaborative.

In the State of Washington, Centers of Occupational Health and Education (COHEs) work with medical providers, employers, and injured workers in a community-based program designed to ensure timely, effective and coordinated services. COHEs improve injured worker outcomes and reduce disability by training providers and coordinating care.

This virtual effort, held from **March 7 – March 18, 2017**, invited members of the general public and key stakeholders, including insurers, providers, state agencies, employers, researchers, program administrators, advocates, and policymakers, to share insight on what it would take for other states to replicate or adapt COHE strategies in their state's service delivery and policy context.

Participants were asked to keep the following in mind while commenting and voting on responses:

What would it take to adopt/adapt key components of the COHE model to address your state's workers' compensation program challenges?

Included in this report is information about dialogue participants, outreach conducted during the dialogue, and top ideas contributed and voted on by participants. An archive of the complete dialogue is available for viewing at SAW-RTW.ePolicyWorks.org.

The multitude of ideas gathered from this dialogue illustrate that collaboration and crowdsourcing with key stakeholders is imperative for the advancement and development of best practices to support inclusive employment for people with disabilities. Results of this online event will be used to guide the work of the Policy Collaborative and its Policy Working Groups to develop resources and materials to assist states and other key stakeholders in improving services to injured workers.

Note: The following section outlines the key metrics from the online dialogue and provides a snapshot of the participation results.

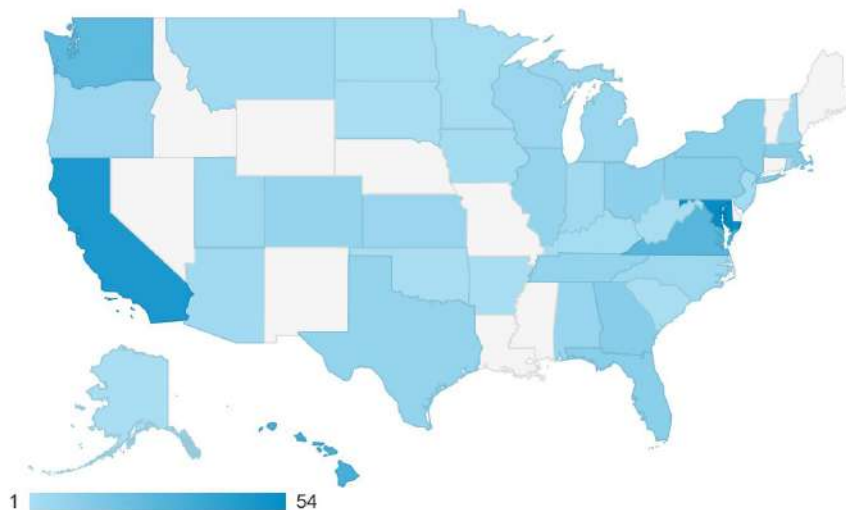
Dialogue Participation Summary

- Dialogue opened on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 at 8:00 am ET
- Dialogue closed on Friday, March 18, 2017 at 11:59 pm ET
- Total Ideas: 11
- Total Comments: 96
- Total Votes: 101
- Unique Visitors: 277
- Total Registrants: 164 (59.21% of unique visitors)
 - Active Registrants: 54 (submitted ideas, voted or commented): (32.9% of total registrants)

Visits during the Dialogue (3/7/17 – 3/18/17)

- Total visits: 431
- Unique visitors: 277
- Total page views: 1,784
- Average pages per visit: 4.14
- Average visit duration: 5:41
- Returning visitors: 37.4%
- Bounce rate (percentage of participants who leave after viewing the first page of the dialogue): 41.30%

Map of Demographics of United States Visits



- Maryland: 54
- California: 47
- District of Columbia: 44
- Hawaii: 32
- Virginia: 27
- Washington: 25
- Georgia: 12
- Florida: 11
- Massachusetts: 11
- New York: 11
- Pennsylvania: 11
- Ohio: 10
- Colorado: 8
- Illinois: 8
- Tennessee: 8
- Texas: 8
- Alabama: 7
- Kansas: 6
- Michigan: 6
- Oregon: 6
- Wisconsin: 6
- North Carolina: 5
- New Hampshire: 5
- Utah: 5
- Arizona: 4
- Indiana: 4
- Montana: 4
- Iowa: 3
- New Jersey: 3
- Rhode Island: 3
- Kentucky: 2
- Minnesota: 2
- North Dakota: 2
- Alaska: 1
- Arkansas: 1
- Oklahoma: 1
- South Carolina: 1
- South Dakota: 1
- West Virginia: 1

Outreach and Registration Metrics

In order to engage a broad range of participants in the ePolicyWorks online dialogues, our team engages in a multitude of strategic outreach efforts, including emails and social media posts. Email blasts are sent to previous ePolicyWorks dialogue participants and key stakeholders in the current dialogue topics. Our outreach strategy is critical to informing and shaping the conversation in every online dialogue, ensuring that the right people are brought to the table to contribute.

Total Dialogue Outreach Emails

- Email Blasts – 8
- Emails Delivered – 15,652
- Emails Opened – 4,205 (26.87% open rate)
- Total number of clicks on links in emails (excluding multiple clicks of the same link) – 454

Total registrants: 164

Total number of registrants that completed the registration process: 149

Registration Information

As part of the dialogue registration process, registrants were asked to answer a series of questions. Following are some of the responses. A download of the detailed information is attached.

Job Title

- Ability Coordinator
- Absence Manager
- Accessibility Analyst
- Accessible Technology & Alternative Media Coordinator
- Accounting Specialist
- Analyst
- Artist, gallery manager
- Assistant Administrator Vocational Recovery Services
- Associate
- Associate Professor
- Asst. Vice President, Education & Youth Transition
- Asst. VP, Workforce Solutions
- Attending college
- Benefits Manager
- CEO
- Chairman of Board
- Chief of Operations
- Chief Operations Officer
- Clinical Psychologist and Disability Manager
- Community Employment Coordinator

- Community of Practice Lead
- Consultant
- COR-QA-Mechanical/Civil Engineering Tech
- County Outreach Coordinator
- Customer service
- Data and Assistive Technology
- Director Occupational Health and Workers' Compensation Services
- Director of Civil Rights
- Director of COHE
- Director of Employment Programs
- Director of Employment Services, I/DD
- Director of Policy Strategy, Analysis, and Development
- Director, Vocational Services
- Disability Management Consultant
- Disability Management Specialist
- Disabled ASE/BMW Master Technician
- EH & Safety/WC
- Employment Coordinator
- Employment Initiatives Director
- Employment Specialist
- Engineering Equipment Operator/Grade 10
- Equal Employment Opportunity Manager
- Executive Director, Product Policy
- Financial specialist
- Former Project/ Partnership Program Leader
- Founder
- Government Compliance Diversity Manager
- Health Scientist
- Healthcare Administrator
- HR Compliance Specialist
- HR Regulatory Coordinator
- Human Services Program Specialist
- IL ADVOCATE COORDINATOR
- IL Director
- Independent Living Coordinator
- Integrated Leaves & Accommodations Program Manager
- LEAD Center Project Director
- LEND Trainee
- Manager, Consumer Affairs
- Manager, Medical Policy
- Managing Director
- Medical Director
- Medical Office Account Manager/Insurance Specialist
- Medical Program Specialist
- Operations Management Consultant II
- Owner/President
- Paralegal
- Physical therapist
- Policy Advisor
- Policy Fellow
- Policy Specialist
- Potato Chip Reseller
- President
- President Emeritus
- Principal Research Associate
- Professor
- Program Administrator Acquired Brain Injury
- Program Manager, Talent Acquisition
- Programs and Partnership Director
- Project Director

- Project Manager
- Provider Relations Mgr
- Public Policy advocate
- Registered nurse
- Research Associate
- Researcher
- Retired
- Return to Work Consultant
- Risk Manager
- RN Case Manager
- Safety Health & Return to Work
- Senior Policy Advisor
- Senior Research Analyst
- Senior Research Associate
- Senior Researcher
- Social Service Coordinator
- Social Worker
- Special Assistant
- Sr Absence Consultant
- Stocker clerk
- Supportive help
- Ticket to Work Coordinator
- Veteran Community Employment Coordinator
- Vocational Coach
- Vocational Program Manager
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- VP
- Web applications
- Workers' Compensation Supervisor
- Writer/Editor

Type of Organization

- Insurer: 5 (3.36%)
- Employer: 17 (11.41%)
- HR professional: 1 (0.67%)
- Health care provider: 12 (8.05%)
- Vocational rehabilitation provider: 11 (7.38%)
- State WC agency: 8 (5.37%)
- State labor agency: 3 (2.01%)
- Federal agency: 15 (10.07%)
- Attorney: 2 (1.34%)
- Injured worker: 5 (3.36%)
- Other: 70 (46.98%)

State

- Alabama: 2
- Alaska: 3
- Arizona: 2
- Arkansas: 1
- California: 10
- Colorado: 3
- Connecticut: 1
- Delaware: 1
- District of Columbia: 7
- Florida: 7
- Georgia: 2
- Hawaii: 2

- Idaho: 1
- Illinois: 5
- Indiana: 5
- Iowa: 3
- Kansas: 2
- Kentucky: 1
- Maine: 4
- Maryland: 12
- Massachusetts: 6
- Michigan: 4
- Minnesota: 5
- Mississippi: 1
- Montana: 1
- Nevada: 1
- New Hampshire: 1
- New Jersey: 1
- New York: 6
- North Carolina: 1
- Ohio: 7
- Oregon: 1
- Pennsylvania: 7
- Rhode Island: 1
- South Carolina: 2
- South Dakota: 1
- Tennessee: 5
- Texas: 3
- Utah: 2
- Virginia: 5
- Washington: 11
- Wisconsin: 3

Popular Ideas Contributed by Dialogue Participants

The following details the top 5 ideas with the most votes by participations. The thumbs up icon in each graphic reflects the number of votes the idea received from participants and the speech bubble icon reflects the total number of comments participants contributed to the idea.



1 Work with employers to develop modified work programs

Modified work programs provide injured employees with light duty or more manageable tasks to facilitate early return to work. The duties are gradually scaled up to normal levels. These programs can cut in half work loss days, as well as significantly increasing the proportion of employees who return to work. However, modified work programs are not easy to implement. Successful implementation includes employer knowledge of modified work strategies, a range of options for modifying tasks and providing job accommodations, and ensuring that employees have a good understanding about the program and positive attitudes toward returning to work.



2 Create an Environment of Trust

I have a knowledge of Workers Compensation from the Providers view. What I heard many injured workers say was they were afraid that getting hurt on the job would cause them to lose their job. From my experience, the insurance companies just see \$ signs and push for the return to work. The employers fear that their premiums will go up and push for the return to work and the one who takes the brunt of all of that is the injured worker. The injured worker feels that the minute they were injured or informed their employer of the injury that they were looked at differently. It becomes them against the employer.

I like the fact that the COHE model has a case manager/advocate who from the video I saw is looking out for the injured worker. In my humble opinion if all states were to adopt an advocate model in which the advocate's job is to ensure the best for the injured worker. The injured worker's return to work will be expedited.





Engage employers to support COHE strategies

Reducing lost work days can be a significant benefit for employers. Getting buy-in from employers can provide important leverage with insurers. Employers are motivated to purchase their WC insurance from payers who will hold providers accountable for rapid return to work.



Provide evidence of effectiveness of Washington COHE experience

A key step in convincing key stakeholders to consider adopting/adapting COHE strategies would be to provide evidence of improvements in quality, cost savings, and return to work outcomes. For example, the Washington State labor agency estimates a savings of \$3,175 per claim and 20% fewer days away from work for workers served by COHE providers compared to non-COHE providers. <http://bit.ly/2qTrCtt>



Create compelling message about benefits of COHE to providers

A key to the COHE approach is providers' use of effective occupational health practices. Engaging providers in the return-to-work process requires creating a compelling case for change. This can be focused on making themselves attractive to payers, it can focus on adopting medical practice guidelines they need to follow, in can even involve provider incentives. A key is educating medical providers on their role in return to work.



Conclusion

Through the RTW Strategies: Washington’s COHE Model National Online Dialogue, ODEP’s Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work (SAW/RTW) Policy Collaborative successfully leveraged leading-edge crowdsourcing tools to engage individuals and organizations interested in efforts to build a more disability-inclusive workforce in a virtual conversation on ideas for effective disability-inclusive recruitment strategies.

In summary, the online event attracted more than 270 visitors, of which 164 registered and 54 actively participated by posting 11 unique ideas, 96 comments and 101 votes. The ideas, input and responses of the participants contributed through this online dialogue are now being analyzed in an effort to inform the efforts of the Policy Collaborative and its Policy Working Groups to develop resources and materials to assist states and other key stakeholders in improving services to injured workers.