



News You Can Use from the RETAIN Demonstration Project

March 2019

Welcome to the March 2019 issue of *The RETAIN Report*—the internal e-newsletter for awardees of the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) Demonstration Project.

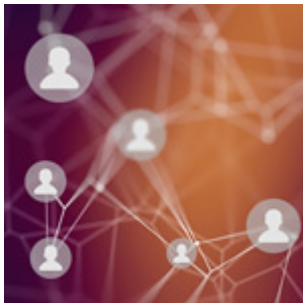
Thank you for reading, and please feel free to share this [subscription link](#) with other RETAIN team members as appropriate.



Highlights from the Field

RETAIN's federal project officers and TA team members are energized by the progress of the RETAIN state teams. Indeed, great things are happening as you and your fellow awardees progress through the planning stages of your demonstration projects.

Across the states, teams are fine tuning workplans, recruiting partners and return-to-work coordinators, developing educational materials, conducting gap analyses, hosting stakeholder focus groups, and more. We're looking forward to learning more during our upcoming site visits, and to assisting your teams as your projects evolve.



RETAIN TA in Review

It's been a busy couple of months on the RETAIN technical assistance (TA) front. Since our last issue, we've hosted several TA webinars, launched the [RETAIN Virtual Online Community](#), issued a variety of communications-related tools to help you create branded RETAIN products, and provided one-to-one guidance to states. If you haven't already, be sure to check out the following resources in the Online Community:

- Sample data agreements (under *Resources>IT and/or Data Systems*)
- The *Communications Toolkit for RETAIN Awardees*, sample talking points, downloadable graphics, and design templates (under *Communications Corner*)
- Archives of recent webinars (under *On-Demand Multimedia*) including:
 - *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act: Basics in RETAIN*
 - *An Overview: Models of Stay-at-Work and Return-to-Work*
 - *Follow the Roadmap: How Communications Can Enhance Your RETAIN Demonstration Project*
- Photographs of RETAIN team members (under *About RETAIN*). These include team members from the Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Employment & Training Administration, the Social Security Administration, AIR,

Concepts, Inc., and Mathematica Policy Research. Please check them out to help you put faces to our names!

RETAIN is all about knowledge sharing, and the Virtual Online Community is *the* place to make this happen. Please enroll in the various sections of the Online Community by following the instructions provided to you via email, and be sure to start contributing to the platform's online forums. If you don't have access to the online community, please visit <https://RETAINTA.org/> and click "Request an Account" in the right-hand side bar. Questions? Just email RETAINTA@air.org.

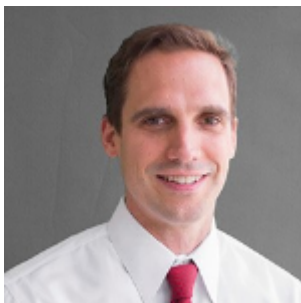


Greetings from the Social Security Administration (SSA)

A Message from SSA Associate Commissioner Katherine Bent

On behalf of SSA's Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support, I want to welcome you to this exciting collaboration between your programs, the Department of Labor (DOL), and SSA.

At Social Security, we know that the path to receiving disability benefits often starts years before people apply. We believe it is important to help injured and ill workers retain self-sufficiency whenever possible. RETAIN offers us a unique opportunity to target individuals very early, much sooner than they would have the need to apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Partnering with DOL allows us to identify those individuals and draw upon your efforts and DOL's employment expertise to serve them better. Our collaboration in the RETAIN Demonstration Project offers us the opportunity to evaluate the effects of this intervention for injured workers. If this project demonstrates that workers are able to remain self-sufficient, that will benefit all of us, especially the workers themselves.



Meet the Independent Evaluator

A Message from David Wittenburg, RETAIN Evaluation Project Director, Mathematica Policy Research

Mathematica Policy Research is delighted to be providing evaluation technical assistance (TA) on the RETAIN Demonstration Project. Our work with you is consistent with the broader mission of [Mathematica's Center for Studying Disability Policy](#)—to empower people with disabilities, improve outcomes, and promote efficient use of limited resources.

Our overarching goal in working with each state team is to develop an understanding of your activities and plans, and provide evaluation-related TA throughout Phase 1. Then, during Phase 2, we will support SSA and DOL to maximize potential learning from the evaluation of each state's RETAIN program.

If you have not spoken with us already, we look forward to meeting soon. Our project leadership team includes myself, Yonaton Ben-Shalom (co-evaluation technical assistance lead), and David Stapleton (co-evaluation technical assistance lead). The state

liaisons include Michael Anderson, Janine Bologna, Jessica Laird, Frank Martin, and Ankita Patnaik. You can find all of our photos in the *About RETAIN* section of the [Virtual Online Community](#). We look forward to working with you!



As you know, RETAIN is led by the Office of Disability Employment Policy in collaboration with DOL's Employment & Training Administration (ETA) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). The image above features photos of our wonderful colleagues on the ETA and SSA RETAIN teams. Clockwise from the upper left are Emily Roessel (SSA), Jimmie Curtis (ETA), Steve Rietzke (ETA), and Jackson Costa (SSA).

RETAIN would like to thank Elisa Walker who played a critical role in developing the RETAIN initiative during her time at SSA. Elisa recently left the agency for a new position at the House Social Security Subcommittee. We would also like to thank SSA's Terri Utermohlen for her contributions to the RETAIN initiative. Though Terri will remain with SSA, she is moving on to assist with other agency initiatives. Thank you and best of luck in your next chapters, Elisa and Terri!



Archived Webinar: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act – Basics in RETAIN

View the archived version of the March 12th RETAIN webinar about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). It includes a brief overview of the privacy and security rules, data elements considered to be protected health information, entities covered by HIPAA, study participant groups, the informed consent purpose, process and components, and the purpose and components of HIPAA authorization forms.

[Access the HIPAA Webinar](#)



CSG Webinar: Implementing Effective SAW/RTW Policies at the State Level

View the archived version of the February 15th webinar hosted by the Council of State Governments (CSG). The program explores why stay-at-work/return-to-work (SAW/RTW) issues are important at the personal, policy, and state level. Panelists include policymakers from Kentucky, Maryland, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C., as well as representatives from ODEP.



RETAIN Resource: IT and Data Systems Tool (Coming Soon!)

Are you interested in identifying the potential needs and gaps in your information technology (IT) and data systems for RETAIN? If so, plan to take advantage of an upcoming resource that will guide you through key steps including: identifying and documenting IT/data systems needs including the development of user stories and acceptance criteria; understanding current systems; and identifying the gaps between needs and current systems. This resource is intended for use by states at any stage of the IT/data systems process. For those at the initial stages, it will serve as a primer and overall guide. For those in the implementation phase, it may be used as a checklist to review and, if applicable, revise. If your state team is interested in a one-to-one walk-through of the steps and resource, please contact your RETAIN TA/AIR state liaison.



RETAIN Podcast: Shifting Focus from Pain to Function (Coming Soon!)

Dr. Maja Jurisic, an occupational medicine specialist and vice president and medical director at Concentra Medical Center, will share her expertise in occupational health and provide strategies to help healthcare practitioners and clinicians shift their focus from pain to function when working with an injured or ill worker. Stay tuned for details!



Mark Your Calendar

- State site visits (March-August 2019)
- April webinar: *Early Intervention Strategies for Return-to-Work and Stay-at-Work (SAW/RTW) – Best Practices in Workplace-Based Interventions to Facilitate SAW/RTW Outcomes* (Details coming soon!)

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