

## Ohio RETAIN Uses Survey Data to Develop Refresher Course for Health Care Providers

*By acting on survey responses, Ohio RETAIN developed a refresher course that enhanced training content for health care providers. This course reinforced providers' ability to identify patients who would benefit from RETAIN, facilitated providers' patient referrals for rehabilitation services using the electronic medical record (EMR) system, and helped providers customize patients' care.*

### BACKGROUND

Ohio RETAIN is striving to ensure that participating health care providers work together with a larger network of physicians, nurses, rehabilitation specialists, employers, and job centers to help workers experiencing an injury or illness to stay at work or return to work (SAW/RTW). The program designed a five-module, online, self-paced training course for

providers. The course is a cost-effective and safe alternative to in-person learning during the pandemic. Participating providers receive a stipend and continuing education credits for course completion. The course objectives are as follows:

- Introduce the Ohio RETAIN program's history, origin, and purpose.
- Describe the best practices and values of the RETAIN project and the role of the health care provider, and instruct providers on referring patients to RETAIN.
- Identify essential stakeholders, their roles, and members of the RETAIN team.
- Explain the influence of pain on a patient's recovery, pain management modalities, and use of the Opioid Risk Tool.
- Introduce and define the key elements of the biopsychosocial model, the functional recovery questionnaire, and functional recovery interventions.



# RETAIN

*Ohio is participating in RETAIN (Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network) to build connections and improve coordination among employers, health care providers, and other key parties to help newly injured and ill workers stay in the workforce. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), in coordination with several partners, leads Ohio RETAIN. The U.S. Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Social Security Administration, sponsors RETAIN.*

## CHALLENGE

After completing the original modules, health care providers were asked to take a survey on how to improve the course. Many wrote that they were either unfamiliar with the benefits of the program or did not understand how to use the RETAIN tools in the EMR. Ohio RETAIN realized that it needed to strengthen the information presented in the courses to encourage health care providers to become involved in the RETAIN network.

## ACTIONS

To ensure that providers understand the benefits of RETAIN and how to use the tools in the EMR, Ohio RETAIN developed a refresher course for providers to take 1 year after completing the original modules. This course reinforces all five original modules and leads health care providers step-by-step through the instructions in the EMR to document their RETAIN patients' progress in it. The course also requires knowledge checks and answers the most frequently asked questions from the survey.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS AND RESULTS

The RETAIN refresher course helped providers feel confident in their ability to identify eligible patients for the Ohio RETAIN program a year after the initial training, navigate the EMR system and use its tools, communicate across all teams working within the Ohio RETAIN program, and customize care delivery for patients. All 128 health care providers enrolled in the course also said they were willing to recommend the OH RETAIN program and recruit other providers. Ohio RETAIN effectively addressed the challenge outlined above and helped to achieve the following:



### Challenge-Actions-Results

**Challenge:** Health care providers identified knowledge gaps in their training modules.



**Actions:** Ohio RETAIN developed a refresher course to address the gaps.

**Results:** Health care providers identified more patients eligible for the Ohio RETAIN program and were able to better communicate across teams, implement related tools, and tailor patient care.

- ✓ *Build a connection between the health care and workforce industries.*
  - The refresher course taught providers how to communicate patients’ needs across all teams within the Ohio RETAIN program, from rehabilitation specialists to employers, by reinforcing RETAIN best practices and providing instructions on using the tools in the EMR.
- ✓ *Create an integrated team with expertise across different functional areas, from health care to rehabilitation to employment services.*
  - After completing the course, more health care providers began to communicate across all patient care and employer teams. In addition, they began to learn more about workflow tasks and discovered how to apply methods to streamline processes effectively.
  - By applying these skills, health care providers increased program sustainability by developing an inclusive culture of support, coordinating tasks across the network, and fostering an atmosphere of shared decision making. As a result, the RETAIN program is more attractive to prospective health care providers.
- ✓ *Develop and implement processes to identify those in need of services before their adverse circumstances worsen and further hinder their employment opportunities.*
  - Health care providers learned how to assess whether patients were eligible for Ohio RETAIN services when patients presented for treatment and to refer them for services. Because of these early interventions, patients receive better care, providers more often supply the documentation needed for patients to stay at or return to work, and patients become more involved with their care, leading to better outcomes.
  - In addition, health care providers have access to a Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) tool within the EMR that documents tobacco use, financial resource strain, transportation strain, stress, intimate partner violence, housing stability, alcohol use, food insecurity, physical activity, social connections, and depression. Using the SVI tool helps providers customize their RETAIN patients’ care and address the areas of greatest SAW/RTW need regarding social vulnerability in the future.



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