

RETAIN Return to Work Coordinators CoP—Notes

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Darcee went over the community of practice (CoP) guidelines, then engaged the group in an icebreaker. Darcee then covered the agenda for today's CoP, and the participants introduced themselves. During introductions, participants shared the following topics of interest:

- Kansas—How to engage employers regarding proper work accommodations
- Minnesota—How to interact with employers to get them more engaged
- Ohio—How do we communicate more efficiently with employers to get them more engaged
- Vermont—How to connect RETAIN participants to different services like vocational rehabilitation

Darcee then revisited the purpose and goals of the RTW Coordinator CoP. She asked CoP participants if they had anything to add or change to the following goals:

- Connecting and building relationships
- Sharing what is working well for you and lessons you have learned
- Getting new ideas to overcome challenges you are experiencing
- Receiving support and information relevant to your work

CoP participants liked the purpose and goals and had nothing to add.

Topics Discussion

Participants reviewed the following priority categories from the last RTW Coordinator CoP: Process and Strategies, Participant Needs, Employers and Other Partners, and Providers. CoP participants then discussed each category to determine if anything needed to be added, changed, or reprioritized.

Process and Strategies

The previous CoP group identified the following priority topics for process and strategies (bolded items = highest priority):

- Discharge
- **Referrals (how to try and get more referrals versus seeking out participants)**
- **Participants enrolling and then not responding to communication**
- How to not appear as spam when contacting participants
- Retention focus: service to active participants versus potential participants (recruitment)
- Role of RTW coordinator in effective discharges (warm handoffs to partners, challenges)

However, after a group discussion, current CoP participants had several changes and updates to this category. They added the topic of keeping participants engaged with a focus on barriers to participant engagement and balancing participation between the healthcare and workforce sides. That new topic

also became the new number one priority for this category. Process and Strategies priorities were revised as follows:

1. Referrals (how to try and get more referrals versus seeking out participants)
- 2. Keeping participants engaged**
 - Previous CoP topics: Participants enrolling and not responding to communication, how to not appear as spam when contacting participants
 - Barriers to participant engagement: not responsive, disengage when not eligible for support services/no tangible gain
 - Balancing participation between the healthcare and workforce sides when already employed
3. Role of RTW Coordinator in effective discharges (warm handoffs to partners, challenges, potential follow-up)

Participant Needs

The previous CoP group identified the following priorities for participant needs:

- Some people having phones that require extra minutes and run out of time
- Working with participants who may be technologically deficient
- Unavailable resource funding or diminished rent assistance
- Education on topics (e.g., FMLA paperwork, accommodations) in a follow-up call with patients who have enrolled

The current CoP group made several additions and adjustments to this category. Supporting resources for participants became a new topic, and education on topics in a follow-up call with patients became a subtopic. Two other new subtopics under supporting resources for participants were added: (1) assisting patients through the ADA process of filing for accommodations and (2) identifying additional educational options and/or further job goals and confidence. The CoP group voted supporting resources for participants as the new top priority. Priorities for this category ultimately were revised as follows:

1. **Working with participants who may be technologically deficient (now a low priority)**
 - Some people having phones that require extra minutes and run out of time
2. Unavailable resource funding or diminished rent assistance
- 3. Supporting resources for participants**
 - **Previous CoP topic: Education on topics in a follow-up call with patients who have enrolled (e.g., FMLA paperwork, accommodations, etc.)**
 - Assisting patients through the ADA process of filing for accommodations
 - Identify additional educational options and/or further job goals and confidence: understanding additional grants the government can assist with (tools and resources), FSA applications, thinking outside the box

Employers and Other Partners

The previous CoP group identified the following priorities for this category:

- How to sell employers on referrals that only have a 50/50 shot of receiving services.
- Engagement of unions and TPAs
- How to navigate companies when participants feel they were not given enough services
- **Trying to get employers engaged**

The current CoP group made several changes and additions to this category. Engaging unions became a subtopic under engaging employers and was expanded to include leveraging unions as a contact to employers. Two other subtopics were added under engaging employers, including (1) challenges/barriers to employer engagement and (2) how to add RETAIN as a benefit package for the employer. Engaging employees was still the top priority for this category. The priorities for this category eventually were revised as follows:

- How to sell employers on referrals that only have a 50/50 shot of receiving services
- How to navigate companies when participants feel they were not given enough services
- **Engaging employers**
 - Challenges/barriers to employer engagement: employers not willing to participate with workforce staff, participants not wanting RETAIN to speak with employers (fear of being let go if employer finds out they need accommodations)
 - Leveraging unions as a contact to employer/advocate to program (more responsive)
 - How to add RETAIN as a benefit package for the employer

Providers

The previous CoP group identified one priority for this category:

- Successful ways of engaging and following up with providers

The current CoP group made the following additions to this category: (1) engaging the support team that works with the provider and (2) looking at providers as employers, buy-in. This category was still seen as a priority. This category eventually was revised as follows:

- **Provider engagement**
 - Successful ways of engaging and following up with providers
 - Engaging the support team that works with the provider
 - Looking at providers as employers, buy-in