



UTILIZATION OF AN INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO IMPROVE WORKER HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

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A Growing Workforce, Growing Challenges

Johns Hopkins University, located in Baltimore, Maryland, has long been dedicated to helping keep its employees safe, healthy, and productive. While medical nursing, nurse case management, and claims payment functions had previously been integrated to help achieve these goals, the approach was a “low-tech” one, characterized primarily by face-to-face communications as well as retrospective review, investigation, and resolution of injuries. With its current employee population at more than 39,000—up more than 86% in just over a decade—and with employees located in various sites throughout Maryland, Johns Hopkins now seeks to create a more “high-tech” approach to integrating key personnel and functions to help ensure the safety and productivity of its employees. Johns Hopkins plans to meet these objectives by implementing its newly designed Web-based safety initiative.

Using Technology to Improve Safety, Increase Productivity

Johns Hopkins is launching a highly integrated Web-based system that interweaves case management, safety oversight, and claims management functions, in addition to other functions essential to helping promote and track employee safety and productivity. The system will capture data such as details of an employee’s injury, status of the investigation of the responsible work-site hazard, and whether the hazard has been eliminated.

For example, a recent area of focus was on accidents that took place in a hospital. Specifically, the type of flooring was closely assessed and found to be too slippery. A study showed that when wet, floors with certain waxes are more hazardous than others. Therefore, the hospital switched to a safer floor wax to reduce the incidence of work-site injuries.

Implementing the New System

The new Web-based system will allow injury data to be entered at the time the employee seeks care at the clinic. The data will then be sent to the safety office, whose personnel can quickly investigate and eliminate the risk, thereby helping to reduce the likelihood of further injuries and subsequent decreases in worker productivity. Additionally, since case managers will become aware of the case

more quickly than with the previous low-tech approach, they can help the employee access care in a more timely manner, follow the case more closely, and ultimately help return the healed employee to work more quickly. Multiple users, each with varying levels of security, will have access to the system, allowing real-time access to all details of the claim.

Building Upon Past Success

This initiative seeks to build upon the success of the Johns Hopkins integrated workers’ compensation program launched in 1991, which focused on reducing the incidence and costs of workplace injuries and increasing the performance of its workforce. Features of the initiative included patient advocacy and customer service, occupational medicine oversight, close follow-up, and identification and control of hazards at the work site, among others. Results over 10 years were significant. Among them: decreases in frequency of lost time, medical claims, and total workers’ compensation expenses of 77%, 60%, and 54%, respectively.

Measuring Success

Johns Hopkins will measure the success of its new initiative by assessing the claims management process variables, such as:

- Time to report injuries
- Time to investigate work-site hazards

It will also look at outcomes, including:

- Frequency of injuries
- Number of days lost
- Workers’ compensation claims
- Temporary/total days paid
- Hearing rates
- Medical, indemnity, and administrative costs

Each of these will be assessed before and after implementation of the new system. This comparison will allow Johns Hopkins to identify the specific strengths of the new integrated approach in helping reduce work-site injuries and increase worker productivity.