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Real-Life Robocop: Meeting "Impossible" RTW Goals in Catastrophic Cases



Jeremy Romero
New Mexico Department of Public Safety Team



Trish Elizalde
Genex Services



Learning Objectives

- Learn why early case management intervention can help establish important goals
- View the latest in exoskeleton designs
- Understand how technology helps injured workers return to the workplace



How Patients Get Lost in a Claim

- Communication issues
- Legalities, process and procedures
- Preauthorization and documentation
- Treating injury, not the injured
- Too many players



Psychosocial Impacts of Return-to-Work

- Confusion over workers' comp processes, who will pay for what, etc.
- Fear of losing job or livelihood
- Fear of re-injury
- Family matters
- Co-worker disconnect



Empathy's Bottom Line

- Motivate injured worker to meet return-to-work goals
- Feeling that employers/providers are advocates and not enemies
- Stronger family involvement
- Co-worker connections
- Less need for legal services



Team Effort

- Implement early case management intervention
- Open and maintain communication lines with injured worker, employer and providers
- Make medical "handoffs" smoother
- Keep injured worker at core of RTW efforts



Injured Worker's Active Role

- Why communication is crucial
 - Nearly as important as injury severity in determining RTW goals
 - Direction should be back to work, back to function
 - Develop goals keep the injured employee engaged in his work "community" when he is away from the workplace



Developing a Road Map Back to Work



Assistive Tech: Is It Worth It?

- Determine if assistive tech improves RTW or MMI goal
- Overcome sticker shock: short-term vs. long-term costs
- Address concerns: injured worker, payer, employer



Jeremy's Improved Function

- Increased muscle mass and fitness
- Elimination of pain meds
- Improved circulation and blood pressure
- Successful weening off catheter, eliminating UTIs
- Improved psychosocial issues (depression, lack of motivation, anxiety)



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- Training instructor for police force
- Appointed member of New Mexico Gov. Lujan Grisham's department of public safety team



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