

Early intervention by nurse advisors is now available throughout BC

In early April, WorkSafeBC extended its program of early intervention for return-to-work planning by nurse advisors. It is now available in all areas of BC. Many physicians have already used this service and provided favorable feedback. We hope you will find it useful as well.

If you have a patient with a workplace injury that results in time away from work, contact our nurse advisors. They are here to help, no matter where in BC you are located.

Preventing long-term disability

Research and practical experience show that the longer an injured worker is away from work, the less likely it is that he or she will ever return to employment. That's why WorkSafeBC works to rehabilitate injured workers and help them return to work as soon as safely possible. This is better for the worker, better for the employer, and more cost-effective for the entire workers' compensation system.

The role of our nurse advisors is to provide timely assistance and support to injured workers, their employers, physicians, and other health care providers to develop and implement return-to-work plans. If your patient's employer has a return-to-work program that offers injured workers light or modified duties, a WorkSafeBC nurse advisor will contact you to discuss whether the work is safe and appropriate for your patient's clinical condition.

Nurse advisors can now assist in early referrals within a few days of the injury and up to 12 weeks later. In addition, expedited investigations, consultations, surgery, and rehabilitation programs are available to help you resolve clinical issues for your injured patients. While these activities are

completed, many injured workers can remain at work in some modified capacity.

How we can help

The focus of our nurse advisors is to ensure safe and successful return to work for injured workers. Nurse advisors can assist you by:

- Reviewing your patient's job demands and work environment.
- Explaining the available and appropriate transition work in your patient's workplace.
- Developing a safe, timely return-to-work plan as part of your overall recovery plan for your patient.
- Monitoring the progress of your patient through the implementation of the return-to-work plan.
- Providing job coaching if your patient experiences difficulties with certain job tasks in the return-to-work plan.

Our nurse advisors can also provide you with information on Work-

SafeBC expedited services for consultation, investigations, and treatment and assist you in accessing these services for your injured patients.

Billing codes

Here are the billing codes you should use when collaborating with our nurse advisors on a return-to-work plan:

- 19930—for telephone consultations up to 15 minutes in length, regarding return-to-work planning for patients with a workplace injury resulting in time loss. Your cooperation in setting aside time for a telephone consultation with our nurse advisors is appreciated. When a nurse advisor calls your office, your staff can arrange a telephone appointment or you can call the nurse advisor back at your convenience; all nurse advisors carry cell phones.
- 19976—for faxed confirmation of your approval of a return-to-work plan. A nurse advisor will fax a recommendation for a return-to-work plan to you for your approval. If you approve of the plan for your patient, simply sign and return the fax. If you have concerns and would like to discuss the plan, please contact the nurse advisor.

How to reach us

We appreciate your assistance in the rehabilitation of injured workers. You play a critical role by setting expectations for recovery and return to work. Our nurse advisors are here to help. To access their services, please request a call on your Form 8 or 11.

—Don Graham, MD, CCFP
WorkSafeBC Chief Medical Officer