



News from Legislative Committee

OARP's Legislative Committee and Executive Board have been watching a senate bill that would expand services to injured workers but could also potentially dramatically change the fee structure for vocational counselors. This Bill was presented at the February 9, 2007 Management Labor Advisory Committee meeting (see below for information from the minutes of that meeting). Currently, this Bill appears to be tabled but we are watching it very carefully and will notify OARP members if we need your assistance. You may find a copy of the bill online if you wish, or call Grace Smith or Kathy Wallace to obtain a copy.

Exerpt from MLAC Meeting:

SB 405 Vocational assistance benefits provided in workers' compensation claims. A copy of the bill, analysis, fiscal impact statement, and a document named Recommendations from 2004 MLAC Interim Study on Return-to-Work-Updated Report – January 2007 were provided to the committee. The documents are part of the record.

Public Testimony:

Nyla Jerasik, Oregon Workers' Compensation Lawyers Association

Ms. Jerasik provided testimony in support of this bill and reviewed testimony she had previously testified to in 2004 when the committee reviewed the return-to-work programs. Ms. Jerasik testified regarding her own need for vocational assistance as an injured worker and the need for a change in the system.

Chuck Lundeen, Liberty Mutual

Mr. Lundeen testified in opposition to SB 405 and that this bill recommends review at 60 days of timeloss for vocational assistance eligibility. Mr. Lundeen testified that 60 days is too early for a worker with a serious injury to be ready for a vocation program.

Robert Malone, Liberty Northwest

Mr. Malone testified in response to the suggested changes in this bill. He provided general testimony opposing changes the current system.

Chris Davie SAIF Corporation

Mr. Davie provided testimony in opposition to the bill, and testified that the bill would likely create a big financial impact to the workers' compensation system.

Committee discussion

The committee reviewed and discussed the document "Recommendations from 2004 MLAC Interim Study on Return-to-Work-Updated Report – January 2007. The committee

discussed the following concepts: financial impact of the bill, the importance of return to work, and wage considerations in determining eligibility. The committee asked the Department to provide data on the current system, impact of changes made as a result of the 2004 interim study, and how wage at injury impacts eligibly for the program

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Saturday Workshop! May 5, 2007 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Working on the Railroad in the 21st Century

Sponsored by Oregon Association of Rehabilitation Professionals

Portland Community College

**Central Portland Workforce Training Center
1626 SW Water Avenue; Portland, OR 97214**

\$75.00 OARP & IARP Members

\$125.00 Non-Members

Program Overview

- What are jobs like on the Railroad in the 21st century (physical demands, skills required, duties)
- FELA? What is it? What does it mean to a vocational rehabilitation professional?
- RTW Program/Disability Management
- LTD/STD, RRB and the Railroad and Unions: Working in Harmony
- Network Vocational Counselors
- Notes on Ethics

Register online at: www.oarp.org

direct link: <http://www.oarp.org/conferences/2007/2007-0505-program.htm>