



July, 2015

President's Column

Roselyn Blair, MS, CRC

President's Column

Greetings, IARP WA Members! Exciting changes are taking place in the world of rehabilitation right here in our beautiful State. First and most importantly, we have a new Board of Directors seated as of May 1, 2015. Congratulations to Amy Williams being elected to the position of President-Elect, and Nicole Hernandez and Leslie Weaver for being elected into the two open Member-At-Large positions! Remaining 2015-2016 IARP WA Board members include Jennifer Bowes, Past President, Kim North, Secretary/Treasurer, Kari D'Aboy, Member-At-Large, Bradley Ehrlich, Member-At-Large and Michelle Jensen, Member-At-Large. We are fortunate to have such an amazing group of talent and experience sitting at the table!

As you may recall from a past newsletter, the Board has decided to 'change things up' and move the annual conference from the Fall to the Spring. So, mark your calendars, our next annual IARP WA Chapter Conference will be held on 5/19/2016 & 5/20/2016 at the Hotel Murano in Tacoma, WA.

In the meantime, we are working diligently to provide four educational programs with opportunities for more CEUs this year. These programs will be enhanced by the use of GoToTraining, which the Board unanimously voted to implement, so that educational opportunities for CEUs can be accessed on-line.

So many positive changes are happening at the Department and on the legislative front; it's hard to keep up. More information to follow via educational programs, so stay tuned. In the meantime, you can find out more information about changes related to Substitute House Bill 1496 which goes into effect 7/24/2015 here: <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1496-S.SL.pdf>

In closing, if there are curious WA Chapter members out there willing to serve as part of the IARP Board, we need your help! We are currently recruiting members to help with sub-committee work in the areas of Membership, Education and Marketing. We are also currently in search of a vocational rehabilitation graduate student representative. Please contact me via email at: rblair@scsvoc.com.

If there are members who aren't able to volunteer but have specific requests, questions, concerns or kudos for the Board, please contact one of your Board members directly. I look forward to meeting and working with as many of you as possible!

Respectfully,
Roselyn Blair

"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking."-Albert Einstein

Job Analysis SUMMARY Sheet Survey Results

The IARP board wants to offer profuse thanks to everyone who responded to our survey monkey about the L&I JA summary sheet! We received 78 responses, which was almost as many votes as we had in our recent board election! Well done, Vocational Community!

As you may recall, the survey was generated due to L&I's request about how to make the summary sheet more user friendly and encourage use by vocational professionals.

I want you to know that the IARP board heard your responses loud and clear, that the job analysis summary sheet is not a useful tool and does not follow best practices.

The beauty of your overwhelming response is that L&I heard this loud and clear, as well!

We had an exceptionally productive and fruitful conversation with Donna Spencer and Erich Hahn at L&I about the vocational community's aversion to the tool, specifically that it did not match most job analyses formats, that it didn't allow for explanation or expansion of important physical detail, and that it raised the question as to whether the medical professionals were reviewing the job analysis, or only the summary sheet. In short, it diluted confidence in best practices to ensure that a medical recommendation was being provided based on a full and complete understanding of the position being presented.

However, another aspect of the responses from you all, and feedback that L&I has received from the medical community, is that the job analysis summary sheet did provide an ease for reviewing data, in part because the format remained the same. Because the medical providers see so many different job analyses, the summary sheet provided a haven of familiarity that made deciphering the information easier. While we all agree that ease should not replace best practices, making the process more streamlined for these providers may provide better, more useful responses from our medical providers.

Because of all of this, the IARP board has decided to reiterate the benefits of using the standardized job analysis format that was created several years ago. While I know that each firm has developed their own job analysis formats, the IARP board is strongly encouraging Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors who work State Fund claims to use the standardized form. Ideally, this will assist our medical providers in successfully, accurately, and quickly completing their reviews and recommendations.

We will be coordinating a webinar training to explain and demonstrate again how to fill out the standardized form. This webinar will be free for IARP members and (knock on wood), will hopefully include CEUs for CDMS and CRC!

WA IARP Ethics Seminar, August 27, 2015, Suncadia Resort. Free to members!

Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE): Your Essential Role

Sarah Martin, Department of Labor & Industries

Beginning in August 2014, L&I started a project to improve Capacity Evaluations. The goal for the FCE improvement project is to improve the quality and timeliness of the referral, evaluation and reporting processes. This is being accomplished using lean techniques with the development of standards and guidelines to improve consistency and enhance communication.

We are using the Therapy Stakeholder Group and Vocational Technical Stakeholder Group to help create and inform our improvements.

Vocational Providers continue to have an essential role in these improvements. Over 80% of FCEs occur when there is an open vocational referral.

VRC expectations:

- In collaboration with the attending provider, select an FCE provider that is in close proximity to the worker, is able to provide the evaluation within 21 days and has the necessary specialty.
- Call the claim manager to request approval for the FCE with supporting information to include the clinic name/provider number/phone number, reason for the evaluation, and jobs being considered.
- Prior to the FCE, send the essential job analyses (JAs) to the clinic.
- After the evaluation, send JAs with the FCE results to the attending healthcare provider (AP) and ask for return to work decisions.
- If you develop future JAs after the evaluation, use the test results to determine if there is a job match.

Starting in June, selected Therapy Stakeholder Group members are testing out new forms and processes. This includes an updated Capacity Summary form aligned with the Activity Prescription Form and a standard Report Summary format. In addition, we have asked our pilot group to test out some procedural changes.

They will:

- 1) Document their conclusions on the Report Summary and no longer fill out the JA summary sheet or sign the JA signature page. This eliminates duplication, the potential for errors, and places the role of filling out the JA summary/signature page with the attending healthcare provider.
- 2) No longer categorize an individual into a physical demand level. It's common for an individual to cross into different levels which can create confusion. It also doesn't take into account other elements of a job. We would like the emphasis to be on the individual factors of the worker and job instead of solely looking at a category.
- 3) Not fill out the Capacity Summary form and portions of the Report Summary (JA response/referral questions) if the evaluator determines low effort results. If the individual did not provide adequate effort, we do not want return to work decisions made with those results.
- 4) No longer ask the attending healthcare provider for concurrence. It is often not clear what the AP is concurring with and it isn't something necessary to adjudicate a claim. Rather it is the role of the vocational provider to seek return to work decisions by the AP.

Changes we've already made:

- Adopting the name Functional Capacity Evaluation to match national standards for terminology
- FCE clinic receiving access to the claim file
- New FCE Fact Sheet for Workers (F245-416-000)

Other changes we're making:

- Adding FCE Clinics to our Vendor Services Lookup Tool
- Establishing timelines for different parts of the process
 - Claim Manager authorization to Evaluation: 21 days
 - Capacity Summary and Report Summary sent to L&I: 10 days

We appreciate the support and cooperation of our vocational partners in helping to make these improvements! Find more information on our [project website](#).

WSIA Conference Highlights

Michelle Jensen, M.Ed., CRC, CEAS

I had the privilege of attending WSIA's 44th annual conference held at the Three Rivers Convention Center in the Tri-Cities on May 6, 2015 through May 8, 2015. The theme for this year's conference was Wild World of Worker's Compensation.

In one learning lab, Vickie Kennedy the Assistant Director, Insurance Services and Ryan Guppy, Return to Work Partnerships Chief, presented on how to avoid disability through early return to work efforts. The two discussed efforts the Department of Labor and Industries was making to reduce lost time, focusing on streamlining the vocational process, and returning employees to work in a timely fashion. Mr. Guppy focused on the negative consequences of workers not understanding the process and creating their own reality. He stressed how this often leads a worker to attempt to prove their disability to the claim stakeholders, specifically the attending physician, and how this is avoidable through positive interaction. Mr. Guppy also reported on the psychosocial issues relating social conditions to mental health. Mr. Guppy pointed out that the worker is actually the only person who can determine if/when the return to work will happen.

Mr. Guppy and Ms. Kennedy spoke about what the Department of Labor and Industries is actively working on: the proactive first call, answering questions, the importance of return to work discussions, collaborating on the next steps, and demonstrating care and compassion. They also spoke on the use of predictive analytics as a way to assess claims that are at higher risk for long term disability as well as working with a private vocational community to develop earlier vocational referrals to avoid unnecessary delays and negative impacts on claims. Mr. Guppy discussed statistics on early AWA referrals: out of 304 closures for claims assigned for early AWA 38% closed out able to work with the majority of the workers being released back to the job of injury, 34% returned to work, and 1% were found to be in need of retraining benefits.

Bob Wilson, President and CEO of workerscompensation.com was the lead speaker for the 2015 WSIA conference. Mr. Wilson attended the presentation given by Ms. Kennedy and Mr. Guppy. Following this

presentation Mr. Wilson wrote an article on workerscompensation.com noting that the two had made some excellent points dealing with recovering workers on a psychosocial level. Mr. Wilson talked about the importance of changing the phraseology used by and for our industry, stating that Worker's Compensation should be called Worker's Recovery, Adjustors should be called Recovery Specialists, and Injured Workers should be called Recovering Workers. Mr. Wilson commented on his website that he previously had not given enough consideration to points brought up by Mr. Guppy; that of "changing Disability Management to Disability Prevention". Mr. Wilson stated that he had pondered this before; however, noted that "Guppy made excellent points as to why we should use the "prevention moniker." Props to a great presentation given by Vickie and Ryan.

Labor Market Survey Options

Michelle Jensen, M.Ed., CRC, CEAS

During Thursday's learning lab at the WSIA conference, I had the privilege of attending Journey to Discover; New Approach to Labor Market Surveys presented by Jan Donley, owner of J. Donley Associates, LLC and Cloie Johnson, MEd, ABVE-D, co-owner and Rehabilitation Counselor/Case Manager of OSC Vocational Systems Inc. During this presentation Ms. Donley and Ms. Johnson discussed their newly developed approach to labor market survey/research (LMS/R). The presentation covered the new methodology to heighten the objectivity of labor market research completed by professionals within our field. They discussed how to best capture both quantitative and qualitative data; quantitative data using WOIS, ONET, DOT, etc. information and qualitative data from employer sampling, as well as using the VRC's professional clinical judgment to arrive at an opinion regarding the suitability and employability of the occupation for the individual.

Within their presentation it was outlined how all applicable guidelines (RCW, WAC, and VRC standards of practice/codes of ethics) were followed in the preparation of this methodology. The Department has also provided its endorsement of this alternative methodology in the "What's New" "Objective approach to labor market survey, March 2, 2015". They state, "The alternative approach relies heavily on objective labor market data from Federal, State and County resources, while still validating information with specific employers when necessary, for example when the JA doesn't match the physical requirements of the objective labor market data.

L&I believes that all parties can benefit from a more objective approach to labor market surveys. The alternative option presented to L&I appears to provide this objectivity, while reducing burden on employers and VRCs."

Also in attendance at the learning lab was Debra Tollefson Hatzialexiou, head of Legal Services and VDRO at the Department of L&I. From the crowd she gave positive feedback supporting this new LMS approach. We at IARP are working with WSIA and LNI to bring to all VRC's information regarding LMS/R via a webinar presentation by Ms. Donley and Ms. Johnson for our members later this year.

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“A Farewell to Arms”

Jennifer Bowes, IARP WA Past President

Past President's column

I want to thank the members who served last term and have chosen to move on to other endeavors. Chris Fascilla, our previous Secretary/Treasurer, was technically out of this role as of May 2014, but he stayed on for six months to help transition Kim North into the position. She readily picked up the task, easily mastering the skills, and she has maintained a seamless transition to what was a melancholy parting for those of us on the board. Chris has continued to serve the IARP membership through committees with IARP headquarters and he has maintained his influence and excellence for our membership.

Lauri Cousineau was a spectacular addition to our board leadership and Co-Chaired the Education Committee. Although she decided not to run again for the board this year due to time commitments elsewhere, she continued to coordinate and facilitate the résumé training in Kennewick earlier this year, presented by Michelle Bishop, L&I VSS. Her untiring efforts and dedication to the education efforts of the board during and after her tenure were above and beyond what was expected of her, and she provided exceptional service to the membership.

Beckie Hill provided the board with a beginning foundation for media efforts to help us move into the ‘New Millennium’ of technology. We are eagerly, if slowly, joining the technological age.

As well as those who have departed, I cannot express enough *joie de vivre* for the board members who remain and have consistently dedicated their time to IARP's continuing distinction for the WA vocational community. To Bradley Ehrlich, Kari D'Aboy, Roselyn Blair, and Michelle Jensen, words are insufficient to express to you how much I admire and respect your vocational genius, as well as each of you interpersonally.

Additionally, we get to welcome three new IARP board members! Leslie Weaver from Spokane, Nicole Hernandez from Yakima, and Amy Williams (our President Elect) from Vancouver! It swells my vocational heart to see IARP so well represented by professional excellence from around our state!

As I move into my Immediate Past President year (I prefer to still be called the Supreme Goddess, FYI), I am reflecting on how much joy and growth I have experienced over the last year and half. I have been honored to serve the membership and lead the board for my extended term and I am proud of the contributions I was able to make. This opportunity has reaffirmed why I pursue this work, why I am so enthusiastic about the IARP organization, and how I am in such very good company!

It is now time for me to sit back and support the magnificence of our new board President Extraordinaire, Roselyn Blair, who is incredibly brilliant, fiercely capable, and wickedly organized. With her amazing skills, she made my job very easy, and I have utter confidence that she will shine brightly and serve the WA IARP membership outstandingly well. We are in superbly good hands!

I'm now going to sit back and relax in my sunset year, drinking iced tea, and gently rocking back and forth in my chair on the patio. At least, I would, if I had a rocking chair. And some iced tea.

Jennifer “*Back in MY day*” Bowes

Your WA IARP Board of Directors

Roselyn Blair, President
Jennifer Bowes, Past President
Amy Williams, President Elect
Kim North, Secretary-Treasurer
Kari D'Aboy, Member at Large
Bradley Ehrlich, Member at Large
Nicole Hernandez, Member at Large
Michelle Jensen, Member at Large
Leslie Weaver, Member at Large

WA IARP Ethics Seminar, August 27, 2015, Suncadia Resort. Free to members!

Date: August 27, 2015

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

3 CEUs for CDMS and CRC

Where: Suncadia Resort near Cle Elum, WA www.suncadiaresort.com

Why: A gorgeous location for an end of summer conference with friends and colleagues.

Members: Please send an email to: wa.iarp.events@gmail.com with your name and we will sign you up.

Non-members: Please sign up at: <https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/4677962747553019393>

Limited to 25 non-member participants

If the event is full, please email jennifer@bowesvocational.com to see additional arrangements can be made to accommodate.

(The following is an unedited version of topics published on the L&I website. It is included in the IARP newsletter as a way to memorialize this information, as there is no known archive for it.)

Annual training benefit adjustment delay

July 1, 2015

As you may know, the 2015–17 operating budget was adopted just prior to the start of the new biennium, July 1. Because of the delay, we do not have the information needed to determine the new training benefit amount for plans approved on and after July 1, 2015. It may be more than one week before we have the data to calculate the new amount. We will post the new amount on What's New? as soon as it is available to us.

L&I is recruiting new VTSG members

June 2, 2015

We are seeking front-line, direct service providers to serve on the VTSG. Expectations include

- serving 3-year terms;
- attending 3 – 5-hour bi-monthly meetings, alternating between Olympia and Tukwila;
- participating in discussions and providing input concerning vocational services policies; and
- participating in subgroups tasked with exploring policy options.

Note: L&I may be able to assist members with transportation costs.

How will members be selected?

L&I will select 2 members by an application process. We are looking for VRCs who can add diversity to policy discussions. Some of the qualities being sought are

- individual counselors, and
- self-insurance experience.

If you are interested in being considered, please [complete the Application for Membership VTSG form](#) (37 KB PDF) and return by June 30, 2015.

The Plan Approval Template Quiz is now available for 1 CEU

May 18, 2015

VRCs can now watch the [four short training videos](#) on the new Plan Approval Template and take the [online quiz](#) to obtain 1 CEU. The Plan Approval Template is located on the [Plan Development](#) webpage and is designed to reduce delays by making it easier for

- VRCs to submit the right information, and
- L&I vocational specialists (VSSs) to find the information they need.

The Department worked with volunteers from private sector, the Vocational Technical Stakeholders Group (VTSG), and VSS staff to design the new report. The encumbrance forms were also revised except for the Plan Transportation Cost Encumbrance (F245–375–000) which will remain the same for now.

The New Plan Approval Request Report is **required for all state fund cases** and will be **effective May 28, 2015**. If you have questions, contact your assigned VSS or use the Plan Approval Request

Mailbox: PlanApprovalRequest@LNI.WA.GOV

Changes to the Cost Encumbrance Form

The new cost encumbrance form replaces codes R0340 (books) and R0315 (equipment) with one code: **R0312** that will cover Books, Supplies and Equipment. VRCs are still required to enter separate amounts for each of these three categories on the cost encumbrance form. This change will:

- Reduce the need for VRCs to submit multiple plan modifications.
- Simplify the number of codes for vendors.
- Make it easier for the department to move training funds on previously approved plans.

To avoid potential problems, please alert vendors so they are aware of this change when they bill for new vocational plans. For plans that were already approved using the old cost encumbrance form, vendors should bill using the codes listed on the form for that plan. In most cases, this change will not require a plan modification.

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of IARP International, the WA IARP Chapter, or its Board of Directors.