

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Statement

Preventing Needless Work Disability by Helping People Stay Employed

The following portion of the ACOEM statement, grouped under four general recommendations, lists 16 specific areas in which the Stay-at-work/Return-to-work (SAW/RTW) process can be improved.

Adopt a Disability Prevention Model
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increase awareness of how rarely disability is medically required2. Urgency is required because prolonged time away from work is harmful
Address Behavioral and Circumstantial Realities That Create and Prolong Work Disability
<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Acknowledging and dealing with normal human reactions4. Investigate and address social and workplace realities5. Find a better way to effectively address psychiatric conditions6. Reduce distortion of the medical treatment process by hidden financial agendas
Acknowledge the Contribution of Motivation on Outcomes and Make changes to Improve Incentive Alignment
<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Pay physicians for disability prevention work to increase their professional commitment8. Support appropriate patient advocacy by getting treating physicians out of a loyalties bind9. Increase “real-time” availability of on-the-job recovery, transitional work programs, and permanent job modifications10. Be rigorous, yet fair in order to reduce minor abuses and cynicism11. Devise better strategies to deal with bad-faith behavior
Invest in System and Infrastructure Improvements
<ol style="list-style-type: none">12. Educate physicians on “Why” and “How” to play a role in preventing disability13. Disseminate medical evidence regarding recovery benefits of staying at work and being active14. Simplify/standardize information exchange methods between Employers/payers and medical offices15. Improve/standardize methods and tools that provide data for Stay-at-work and Return-to-work decision-making16. Increase the study and knowledge about Stay-at-work and Return-to-work

For the entire statement, go to: <http://acoem.org/guidelines.aspx?id=566>