

R.E.W.A.R.D. Program Advisory Committee Meeting

Transcription

July 29, 2025

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Transcript

Suzy Douglas

We welcome everyone.

Thank you all for being here in the summertime. In the afternoon on a hot day to talk about return to work.

Thank you so much.

What I thought we would do today. Oh, Stephanie's joining us too.

James Talmage 6:00

OK.

Suzy Douglas 6:02

OK, perfect.

So go ahead and sign her in.

Hi, Stephanie.

Stephanie Ritz 6:09

Good afternoon.

Suzy Douglas 6:11

All right.

Well, we're just about to get started.

So your timing was perfect.

Stephanie Ritz 6:16

Excellent.

Suzy Douglas 6:17

I thought what we would do to start the meeting is to do a little bit of a recap about the the conference and the employer track that we just had at the Bureau's conference and talk a little bit about the reward meeting we had pre conference and. Then let get get some feedback from you all.

Let us know where you think, if it if you thought it was successful for employers helpful.

And what we can do better next year?

Different next year or the same next year to get more employers involved.

Because I do think it did help some in promoting awareness to employers that were less familiar with the program and welcome Erin.

So I'll start.

We had the reward employer support network.

That's a long lot of words.

Group meeting prior to the beginning of the conference. Many of you were there at that meeting and I appreciate that, but we had 57 non Bureau employees sign up for that.

So I thought that was pretty good to pre register and we had over 40 who actually signed in.

Think we had more there, but they didn't all sign in.

And so I thought that was a pretty good turn out and we kicked off the meeting.

Talking about the honor roll recipients for 2025, we had six this year, which was fantastic and four came in person to accept their certification from Troy.

So I thought that was a pretty good turn out and we were able to do press release and we have those employers on our website and we're very thrilled that.

That they were able to apply and that they qualified.

So we were happy to award them.

And for those of you who weren't there, we have a couple of those employers that are part of this committee and Nancy's here.

She's with Avery and they were an honor roll. Second year, Honor Roll recipient.

So congratulations, Nancy on all the work.

You all are doing at Averett.

Welcome. And Justin, I don't see Justin Bryant on the call, but US engineering innovations also for the second year was an honor roll recipient.

So we were very excited to award him and his organization for their work.

So that was great.

But again, like I said, we had six organizations this year. Last year, the first year we announced the Honor Roll, we had 7.

So we did drop off just a little bit, not a huge difference, but.

That's one thing that.

Doesn't trigger red flag, but makes me a little concerned that we really were hoping to see that number increase rather than basically stay the same, which is what it did for last year.

So, Stephanie. Yes, ma'am.

Stephanie Ritz 9:08

I was just curious if you knew the reason why they dropped off.

Suzy Douglas 9:14

Well, I know that one organization.

Who applied last year and was awarded the first year the person who was the real return to work coordinator at the organization left. And when I did follow up to see if anyone else was still there because they weren't attending meetings, some of our employer meetings and such.

Stephanie Ritz 9:28

Ah.

Suzy Douglas 9:35

And no one else was really interested in attending and that kind of sparked the topic for the employer session that we had pre conference.

Which is is their succession planning if the return to work coordinator leaves an organization?

And that was a pretty good conversation. I felt like that we had at the meeting, and it seemed like, I think Brian nailed it when he said his take away from all the comments was that as long as the culture was strong.

Of the employers and they had a great return to work culture.

It didn't really matter if the return to work coordinator left or not, because from what we were hearing from the audience that they had it in place and so they didn't have any intention of the program becoming less successful when someone left.

So that was my take away on that. But I think that is why we lost.

Stephanie Ritz 10:25

OK.

Suzy Douglas 10:29

An employer or two so.

Stephanie Ritz 10:31

That's in my experience, that's been a huge issue, especially if their programs been still in development.

It's really sad to see somebody go from, like, really promising and like getting everything in place and then somebody leaves and then just everything goes like by the wayside.

But you know, like you said, the the companies that really have that strong safety program then you know they do fine.

But it's.

Really, in my experience, leadership commitment to.

Suzy Douglas 11:05

And that's a good point. And one of the things that we talked about at the last meeting in February when we all met was that maybe we needed to look at the reward tool kit and see if it needed any updates.

Stephanie Ritz 11:06

It.

Suzy Douglas 11:17

And we'll talk more about that later. But one thing that came out of this discussion during our meeting in June was that maybe we did need to put something in the toolkit about about the succession planning and not just that we need leadership

from the top to have.

Buy in.

But you know, let's have a plan.

So that other folks are trained while the cheerleaders are still there promoting return to work and the coordinators with experience can share it with others.

So it's a good point.

I think we need to be aware of that obstacle going forward and see if we can prevent other employers from from going down that path.

So that was the majority of our meeting that we had. Now Jay gave us an update on the certified physician program.

In June and some of you, again, we're not at the meeting.

So Jay.

I asked him if he would today also give us an update on the CPP and where we are today with that.

Jay Blaisdell 12:15

Sure. We're at 119 physicians right now. I think the biggest news is that we make it another psychiatrist, Doctor Snyder and I are scheduled on August 11th to meet with. Manpreet bindra.

And he is already started the best practices course.

He's about halfway through it, and he's eager to to start practicing workers.

Pop. So he came to us via referral from Doctor Kaiser.

You may know that doctor Kaiser and drive Keith Caruso are the only other.

Psychiatrists on the CPP.

Right now there is a doctor Pang, whom Doctor Snyder and I trained.

Earlier this year in the AMA guides, while he has joined the Mir registry, he has not yet taken the best practices course so.

With Doctor Bindra and Dr. Pang joining us, that will be for physicians.

Who accept workers compensation? Patients for psychiatrists been pretty quiet this summer.

A lot of physicians on vacation and what not.

And I expect.

We'll be trying to reach out again to the East Tennessee clinics.

That's where our our greatest need is currently.

One curiosity. We have a doctor Kathy.

Who is in Paris, TN?

He's moving to Cleveland, TN in. He's an Mir physician and he is a CPP physician.

He's remaining on the registry even though he's changing.

He's changing locations, but he said he's been talking to quite a few physicians down there and they're kind of, I don't know, there's a bias against workers comp.

It seems in the the Chattanooga, Cleveland area and and I've kind of experienced this kind of run into a wall down there and I just throw it out if anybody knows why workers comp has doesn't enjoy the same reputation it does in other parts of the state.

I just don't know why it's hard to recruit physicians in that area of the state, but the Mir registry and the CPP physician has always had a hard time.

Recruiting around the Chattanooga area.

So I just.

I just was curious about that.

Stinnett, Diane 14:56

I can ask a few of the doctors that we use.

I.

I I know one very popular work physician, Dr. Ricky Hutchinson that is used a lot in the Cleveland area.

He and he is.

I mean sharpest attack when it comes to work comp law his is.

He is so busy that he just doesn't have time to do it, and his even his work comp coordinator is trying to push him to to get it done.

I think there's.

Some of the reasons that they that they don't do work comp is there's still the I guess the the reputation of what a hassle work comp is because.

Learning how to do the the ratings, the the impairment ratings is is not just easy.

It's not just common knowledge, it's something they have to go learn in addition to taking on all the patients. But.

A lot of the things I think they don't know is that there's extra reimbursement.

More money in it so I can start passing around to some of the people that some of the doctors that we use and see.

If if those that take work comp would be because that's a good place to start, use those that are already taking work comp, right.

So I'll I'll ask if any of those are interested and just kind of push the fact that that guys there's more reimbursement, why would you, why would you not do it right? But I I know that.

Jay Blaisdell 16:25

But is it? What is this?

What is the specialty of Doctor Hutchinson?

Is he an orthopod?

Is he an orthopedic surgeon?

Stinnett, Diane 16:30

Ortho, he's ortho.

Jay Blaisdell 16:32

Is he a part of? Is he stand alone or is he with a bigger clinic?

Stinnett, Diane 16:38

He's a standalone clinic with another ortho.

Jay Blaisdell 16:43

OK.

Stinnett, Diane 16:43

Their partners.

Jay Blaisdell 16:46

Well, I will.

I will reach out to him myself.

Stinnett, Diane 16:49

And I'll I'll talk.

Jay Blaisdell 16:50

That's secure.

Stinnett, Diane 16:50

There's an urgent care urgent care physician. I know that I'm using right now.
That off the if he'll be interested in doing it.
Those are just a couple that I can check with so.

Jay Blaisdell 17:02

I think, yeah, I think that is absolutely a very good approach.
I mean, that's how we got Doctor Bindra was through Doctor Kaiser, a physician
who's already involved with the workers comp system and and can you know 'cause,
I think they trust a colleague more than they would trust someone like me from the
Bureau trying to promote a program.
So.

Stinnett, Diane 17:25

Actually ask what are the geographic locations of the the four psychiatrists that you
have?

Jay Blaisdell 17:35

Doctor Kaiser, Caruso and Bindra are all in Nashville.
And but that said, Doctor Kaiser.
He practices virtually only now, so and so.
That makes him available to anyone who's willing to undergo virtual treatment.

Stinnett, Diane 17:50

Yeah.

Jay Blaisdell 17:53

Doctor Caruso is in Brentwood or Franklin? I forget.
And Doctor Peng is in Memphis.
He's on the Mir registry, but not on the CPP, and Dr. Bendre is in Nashville proper, so.

Stinnett, Diane 18:10

OK.

I I know a psychologist is not a psychiatrist, so that really doesn't help. But in the Chattanooga area, but that I could talk to, but not a psychiatrist anyway.

Jay Blaisdell 18:21

Yeah.

And that's about all we have going on at the present time.

Stephanie Ritz 18:28

I had a question going back to the psychiatry and getting those doctors into the CPP. Have you guys thought about or is there any relation with the new bill for public safety or police officers and PTSD? Or is there any connection there? HB2577.

If you're familiar with that.

Brian Holmes 18:54

So my sales pitch is that it's easy for.

A Bureau employee to kind of be ignored.

It's a little bit more difficult when you've got a fire captain in full uniform who walks into a local psychologist or psychiatrist office and says, hey, will you help my guys?

They need help.

And it has worked a little bit, but not.

To the point of having psychiatrists sign up for workers compensation on a broader aspect.

The City of Gallatin made a little bit inroads with the.

Technique that that I suggested.

And kind of stole a bit from from put City Gallatin was doing.

Stephanie Ritz 19:50

OK.

Brian Holmes 19:51

So.

Stephanie Ritz 19:52

Let's put in.

Brian Holmes 19:53

Trying to work that angle and and I am trying to work that angle.

Stephanie Ritz 19:56

I've got a new client that's an agent. I'm no longer with the carrier, but.

They specialize with public entities, so they actually mentioned it to me, so I can mention that you guys that were looking for more psychiatrists or psychologists, and that's just something she could bring up in conversation if and when it happens.

But the other thought that I had was with the Chattanooga area.

Have you guys noticed any?

Like trends with the more rural rural areas with Chattanooga being 1A more a smaller metro, but then also the other thought that I had was with the state line and with there being there's there could be, you know crossover with Georgia employers if that's maybe a dis.

Just a thought. Some thoughts that I have.

Jay Blaisdell 20:56

Yeah, neither the CPP or the Mir registries are limited by state boundaries.

I mean, we have.

Stephanie Ritz 21:04

Yeah.

Jay Blaisdell 21:04

We have had physicians on the periphery in other states be a part of the Mir registry and they I mean I think we have a few in, in, in Southaven, Ms. who are on the CPP.

So you know that that would potentially be a good.

Good resource.

Stephanie Ritz 21:23

Yeah. The only reason I mentioned that is because I had a municipality on the state line and they're they were all very resistant to anything to improving their program because Georgia is a federal OSHA plan and they just anything that they get

recommendations on, they push back.

So it just made me think if there's any wonder if there's any connection there.

Brian Holmes 21:52

I would imagine that when they say hey, they're just taking workers compensation and now I have to balance not only Tennessee law, but what is it with Georgia law? Which one is this and how much I need to know that that probably is something that is a little bit more difficult and maybe there's some.

Of our education components that we offer for free or very low cost might be interest them to better understand how Tennessee works.

Suzy Douglas 22:23

Doctor Kirti, you had a question or comment?

Les Kertay, Ph.D., ABPP 22:26

Well, just since I'm in Chattanooga, I mean part of the problem getting a psychiatrist here is that you can't get.

You can't get a patient in to see a psychiatrist, period, much less workers compensation.

I mean, everybody is.

You know, I'm a psychologist.

And if I wanted to get a patient in to see a psychiatrist, it would take me six to seven months unless I hospitalized him.

So it's just, I mean that's part of the problem.

Psychologists we, you know, we've done tried to do education with them and draw them into the fold, but.

Stephanie Ritz 23:08

Well, maybe the new.

Les Kertay, Ph.D., ABPP 23:08

Everybody seems really interested, but they don't want to do the work.

Though.

Stephanie Ritz 23:15

Sorry to interrupt.

Les Kertay, Ph.D., ABPP 23:17

No, no, no.

Stephanie Ritz 23:18

I was just wondering, maybe the new bill is a good talking point now to get in, maybe with the police captains or to say, hey, you know this is a new initiative with the state, just wanted to reach out and I know you guys you know probably Don. Need it.

You know the big burly men or whatever, or people.

But we're here if you need it right.

Just you're in a stressful job.

Just thought.

Les Kertay, Ph.D., ABPP 23:48

Yeah, I I think it could be.

I would certainly be happy to try to help with that, but I need to know more about where we are with the, with the bill and its implementation and what that means for people 'cause, that's the first question everybody's gonna ask.

Like yes, I know there there there's a need, but.

How's it going to work?

And I I don't know enough to know that so.

Stephanie Ritz 24:15

I don't either so.

One of the state employees speak to that.

Les Kertay, Ph.D., ABPP 24:22

OK.

Stephanie Ritz 24:22

But no, I I think really think that's a great I'm.
I'm so glad to hear you're on board with that because it's really needed.

Les Kertay, Ph.D., ABPP 24:29

Yeah, sure.

Troy Haley 24:31

Now the only thing that changed in the law with the passage of that bill is that there's a presumption that the PTSD.

Is work related. The grant program that that came with the firefighter PTSD bill.

A few years ago that that part is not applicable to the.

The police.

The law enforcement, so I mean.

There's always been a work related.

Mental injury.

For law enforcement.

The the thing that's changed has been the the presumption.

And that is a rebuttable presumption.

But but yeah, like Doctor Kurti mentioned.

My conversations with.

Big insurance is that it's a problem in health insurance just as much as it is with the workers comp as far as trying to find a psychiatrist.

And I don't know why.

There's been such an uptick in recent years with mental.

Injuries. But I think it's it's across the board. It just seems to be a mental health crisis.

That that we've got in this country.

Stephanie Ritz 25:55

Well, reducing the stigma is probably one of the first things in a marketing campaign.

But the fact that it is now presumed, I mean, how many police officer related PTSD claims have we actually had accept it in the state?

I mean, I don't know that the number, but I've worked with the city of Baltimore years and years ago and the number of.

Police officer claims that were actually accepted there and they were self insured.

A little different is a lot more than I've ever seen in any other state or municipality, so.

Brian Holmes 26:35

Well, we've got.

An interesting complication that's involved with these cases is because there's another law that requires cities and counties to have.

Employee assistance programs.

And those provide for 10 visits. And so you've got the incident happening, you've got the injured worker going and using this assistance program, seeing a counselor.

Or a psychologist if you will.

And what we've seen is that.

A.

An effective thing that I saw is that they give a panel.

Of physicians that included.

Occupational physicians and fast-paced medical was one that was selected in the injured worker saw the physician there and then that physician referred the injured.

Worker to a psychologist treated with the psychologist for a number of months, and then when the claim concluded, they set up an IME with Doctor Caruso.

Who then gave us the the official diagnosis and gave us the impairment. And so that seemed to be a fairly successful process.

Uh for that particular employer?

Troy Haley 28:06

And it's hard for us to track the numbers on these two because you know, as you know most of.

Your cities and counties.

Firefighters and law enforcement. You know, a lot of those have not opted into the worker's compensation law since they're excluded by statute, unless they opt in. So.

Our our data is not great on you know, the history of those types of claims.

Suzy Douglas 28:45

Well, this is great discussion on the CPP and very helpful.

Thank you all for your input.

There I was going to comment. Also one thing Jay said about East Tennessee and if

anyone knew why some of those positions won't accept workers compensation. I know of a practice that does accept workers compensation, but they e-mail almost every day because their bills are not being paid.

Or their bills are being cut.

And it's very frustrating to the point that they may stop seeing certain.

You know, injured workers from certain carriers or TPA S.

So it's, I don't know.

I know, I know. Aaron.

It's not your organization on the other end of that, but I don't know if you have anything that would help us to educate payers that you know, we want to protect your access to medical care and some of what's going on today is not protective of it at.

All and certainly is not helping us increase it.

Bartholomew, Erin 29:41

Yeah, I I'll be honest.

You know, we've got a separate unit that pays all of our bills and you know, we've got the Tennessee key schedule built into the system and where these providers, you know, have opted in to get that additional reimbursement.

You know, I'm. I'm not certain I'd have to do some investigation into that to see what rules have been built into our system to, you know, allow that additional payment above the fee schedule.

Suzy Douglas 30:14

Thanks, great discussion. Doctor Talmage, did you have anything to add? Or sorry. Stephanie, go ahead.

Stephanie Ritz 30:16

Well.

I was just gonna mention I know that there is a national database of payments made to workers comp. So I was looking at building out a resource for it.

So you can see like 4 particular doctor's office.

How much they build 2 workers comp to Medicare to all of this and then you can track their overtime and maybe see is there a particular doctor in that area that we're looking for that is taking work comp and maybe you know look at it that way?

Suzy Douglas 31:05

Thank you.

Brian Holmes 31:09

My silence is because I have you said a lot of stuff and I could not put that stuff together in my mind. Wrap it around.

Stephanie Ritz 31:17

I was like, OK.

I mean, not everything lands but.

So there's a third party data set that I can't remember the name of it.

But it was like a contract that WR Berkeley had purchased and position view is the name of it.

And it gets all the data.

From physicians and.

I want to say in facilities. No, I think it's just a physician 'cause. It goes by their NPM.

So you can see if their license is active. If they're taking telemedicine and you can see.

The amount of dollars that they've billed for over like the past 12 months and you can see, OK, they've been paid X amount. They've had five unique workers comp patients as compared to maybe somebody else who didn't take any.

So it's a really, really neat data set.

I don't know how much it costs, but.

It's out there somewhere. Physician view is what I want to say. The data set was called.

Does that make sense, Brian?

Brian Holmes 32:29

Just get something to look into.

Yeah, that's that's probably a little bit better than just Googling psychiatrists in Chattanooga area.

Seems like it.

It might have some things to springboard off of, so yeah.

Stephanie Ritz 32:45

I don't.

I don't know how expensive it is, but it's there's at least some, you know, something out there, right?

Brian Holmes 32:53

Maybe we could leverage one of our friends and insurance companies to maybe they already have access to it, but knowing that it exists is a good start.

Suzy Douglas 33:08

Definitely more information than you get from the Department of Health. If you run a report by special team by area, you can see positions, but you have no idea. It might show you on their partition or profile if they accept certain types of insurance, but it doesn't tell.

You how much business they do or if they what the numbers are.

Stephanie Ritz 33:26

Well, the other really neat thing and I'll stop after this about that data set is that it not only tracks its current their current license, but you can see if they've had any motions against them in any other state.

So say their license is was revoked in California, but they're active in Tennessee.

You can see all of that on there.

So it's a really, really great data set.

Suzy Douglas 33:51

Interesting.

OK, Guinea may move on.

That was good information on the CPP. If you have anything else, let us know.

And one of the other areas of the of the employer track that I wanted to ask Brian to talk about was a breakout session that he created a workshop for employers.

And Brian, if you don't mind, if you would tell us a little bit about that and how you think it went and the type of information that you were able to gather from that?

Brian Holmes 34:24

So I'm struggling with this because Nancy and Diane were there and do I want to put them on the spot that would give them any heads up and ask them how their experience was.

Or do I dictate the experience 1st and then set them up to say positive things about it?

Because that's where I was going with it.

But so I'll go for the ladder there and say that I felt like there was about 4550 different.

People in the room with us, we met at seven or eight different tables.

And we just talked about our return to work programs and I listened because obviously I don't have return programs.

So, but I listened and I heard some really great conversations and what we the the idea, the premise behind it was we have this toolkit.

What can we do to expand this toolkit? And I saw a toolkit from Washington.

That talked about what people can do in the logging industry.

So an area that's very difficult to find line duty. And so I thought maybe we could do something like that here in Tennessee and we got some really good notes.

I do have to confess that Abby Hudgens was the best at taking notes out of every from from everybody.

And we've got a starting point to put something together to give ideas to employers about what light duty can work look like.

I can different industries, but it was great. We had people from Vanderbilt University. We had.

Busing operators in Memphis, we had city government employees.

We had electric company water companies, we had manufacturers and food manufacturers and and other things we had maybe only one from the transportation. Shipping industry.

Well, we had a lot of of diversity with the input that we had and we had a lot of really good.

Input.

And I've continued to pat myself on the back for this, because right afterward I had two people.

Independent of one another come up to me and said they've been to this educational conference for several years and it was the best session they ever had.

If they learn more than they had in any other session.

And I thought that's why we're that's why we're doing this right.
We're trying to learn from each other.
That was the point of the employer Support Group, just to learn from one another.
So, Nancy, Diane, do you have anything you want to add?

Stinnett, Diane 37:22

It was.
It was great.
It was very interactive, so it was it was really good.
I I mean, I've been in this field for years and and learned so much just from the people that were coming in and out of the table.
So it was.
It was great.

Nancy Kelly 37:39

I agree with that Diane and Brian and I will tell you that there are many, many employers across the state of Tennessee that are returning people back to work that have returned to work programs.
They're just not part of this program.
And why are they not part of the program?
I think it's just they're busy and they just are doing what they're doing and I was able to speak with the.
Transportation workers from Memphis and.
They would love to have a reward program down there and they're having trouble with leadership. Buy in.
Then we had the pleasure of speaking with the electrical workers and their return to work program is putting.
Their injured workers in the educational.
Process and they go out to community and teach about electricity and they have a van for that educational purpose.
They take to schools, to churches everywhere, and I thought that was brilliant. And, you know, they might not be part of reward, but there are employers doing great thing out there. So I don't think we need to be discouraged.
We might just have to ask employers yes or no.
Do you have a return to work program?

That might be their participation in the reward program.
Because people are busy and I think the 2nd.
And half of the year is going to be a lot better financially for employers than the first half of the year.
And we're buckling up and getting ready for that.
So, you know, I don't think you need to be discouraged by any means that there's not people lined up to participate because there's a lot already participating.
I actually had an opportunity to speak with Senator, Senator Haggerty's office.
They came out to avert, just to see what we were doing.
Tanner Cox, a representative.
From his office.
He just wanted our data.
He wanted to know what we were doing and I shared that with him because I think on a federal level they're looking at, you know, having people return back to work.
And the Medicare Medicaid programs and just sharing with him.
You know ideas, just like we got at Brian's meeting. We got ideas and we shared those because.
Because employers are looking for solutions and those are, you know, even the government's looking for solutions, right. So.
Also, the Sheriff's Office of Putnam County reached out to me and I said, you know, all you have to do is place your injured workers and libraries in the school system you already have.
That we already have, SRO's safety representatives from the Sheriff's Office in the schools, I said, you know, have them work in your libraries.
And when their school's not open, have them work at the Putnam County Library.
So you just have there's opportunities out there and I think that a lot of employers just don't have the time to do a formalized program like the reward program.
But I don't think it needs to be discouraged at all because there's so much happening in Tennessee.

Brian Holmes 41:05

Thank you, Nancy.

Suzy Douglas 41:09

Brian, I thought.

It was great.

I thought it was a great idea.

I thought it was a very well received idea.

Everyone was so engaged in that meeting and that's one of the reasons I wanted to recap some of the sessions we did at the conference because I feel like we are trying to encourage more employers to attend the conference, but also once we get them there to prom.

Reward to promote next steps so you know, looking at next year, we want to start planning early for next year. So if the feedback is such that this was really helpful.

This year? Is it something that we could repeat or is it too early to repeat it for next year?

Do you?

Maybe we have new employers engaged in attending next year, but that's part of the feedback I wanted.

I would love to get from you all today is if you think some of these sessions which I think were very valuable, but maybe that's unbiased because you know, we felt like they were helpful.

But from your perspectives, some of you were there, some of you weren't.

Does this sound like something that we might want to repeat?

Again next year.

Stinnett, Diane 42:13

I was even fighting Brian for the the notes that I was like. I know he's had to take a picture so I could turn him over to him.

The concept of the way the way everything went was really good.

I don't if we want to repeat the exact same kind of topic, but just in case there are repeat employers there, but the format of the meeting was fantastic.

The the participation was fantastic.

Just maybe changed maybe.

What were the info we're trying to gather?

Suzy Douglas 43:02

Sounds reasonable and I think there will be other information we want to gather because as we keep alluding to on and off or we want to look at the toolkit, we know we talked about in February that maybe we need a, we need to update it, but that.

A long process, so one of the other topics I put on the e-mail this morning is looking at a time frame for when we want to look at the toolkit and one thing that we are going to need to do with this and Jamie knows a lot more.

About this than I do, but by next April everything on.

Website has to be ADA I guess accessible and have some upgrades and changes made to the way it's structured.

So that's going to be going through the actual toolkit as it is.

So I don't know if we wanted to try to get any updates before April.

And revise it. But in talking with Brian through e-mail, I think it is a big task.

So I don't know that this is something that we could accomplish between now and and April, but we do want to look at the toolkit.

So maybe the topic for a workshop.

A future workshop might be what other aspect of that do we want to revise and consider new information for in addition to accommodations and transitional duty.

Are there other things that we need help from the employers to help update?

So maybe we can look at that for next year and maybe there's a possibility of even doing a virtual one of these workshops.

You know we have that capability now where I think we can break off in rooms.

In certain types of virtual meetings and have discussion and then come back to the big groups.

So is that something that would interest more employers to attend one of our quarterly employer meetings and Nancy, you mentioned that one of the employers you spoke with, there's a employer that has trouble getting leadership buy in.

Maybe that's a topic we need to have at one of our reward employer support.

Network group meetings is a topic like that.

And then particularly specifically invite.

The individuals you spoke with to see if they would want to attend.

And then maybe have some of the employers talk about how your leadership has bought in, so that those are great ideas and suggestions.

And that's also an area where I need a lot of help.

I'm having difficulty locating speakers willing to speak to our employer group and authors for the reward report.

So ideas and suggestions you have like that that are very pertinent and very helpful, please send those my way.

Be or Brian's way so we can see what we can come up with and schedule meetings.

Said maybe attract new employers, which is what we want to do.

We want to help the ones that are already in the group, but we certainly want to attract new employers too and see how we can help them.

But that brings me back to again.

We're doing the recap on the conference sessions and another session we had and I want to thank Diane and Nancy and Teresa for participating in the return to work incentive panel we had on the last day of the conference and Jeff Francis was also on that panel.

And I thought that one went really, really well too, because you all were able to give specific examples.

And again, I think this is where we had an employer speak up about some issues where they had a return to work program.

They don't any longer.

And Brian was going to send them some information. So I felt like we were meeting the needs of the people in the audience on that day. And that felt really good.

But again, that's my point of view.

So next year, if we did another panel for employers.

Be thinking about. Please. What what you think would be helpful we want.

I think we want to start planning for the conference as early as possible, so maybe even starting this fall we might look at sessions and topics and things that would be helpful to attract employers, but also just the reward employer group meetings and the reward program itself, I.

Would really appreciate your feedback on that, but thank you all so much for doing that panel.

I thought it went really well. If anyone has any comments about that panel, feel free to jump in.

But I thought that was really a helpful one as well.

We we one session I didn't mention of course is we did have a George Vera from the American Job Center talk again.

He talked to our reward group earlier in one of the virtual sessions and he came and did in person presentation on all the things that the job centers can do for employers, not just in, you know, people looking for jobs, but for employers.

And I thought that was a good one too, so I appreciated that. But with that again.

Really would appreciate specific feedback that you have for next year.

Where we can go.

What sessions you think we need to help the program going forward and of course in keeping their interest to come to the conference and have an employer track that is worthy of their time and meaningful.

And again, Brian, that session was great.

I thought that that was one of my favorite ones from the conference.

So one other thing, I thought that went well at the conference and we did it at the brunch meeting as well is we use the QR code for the return to work coordinator training and Ryan posted that.

And Jamie, I think you and Kyle will help put it on all of the employer sessions maybe, and I believe, Jamie, you said we had how many people register for this session for return to work coordinator training?

Jamie Ballou 48:22

I think it was over 50.

Suzy Douglas 48:22

So.

Jamie Ballou 48:23

It was a lot.

I was like they were flying in the registration, so we we have a a pretty big class.

Brian, would you think this is one of the bigger classes?

Brian Holmes 48:35

It is. I think we had 29 participate last Thursday in the first full session that we did.

And Jamie, I think you sent me maybe a dozen actually watched the videos and did their homework before the 1st class.

And so, you know, you say a dozen out of 50 or so, so a little less than 1/4 of them.

Jamie Ballou 48:53

Yeah.

Brian Holmes 49:01

But that actually is really good compared to what we normally see.

And that we have 30 out of 50 attend.

That's about same ratio that we have.

We'll see more people drop off as the the training program progresses through October, so it's a long course and so people attend what they want, what they're interested in learning about, and we'll see if some people come, some people go. Like got some of them doubling up so it's hard to count 'cause they're they're sharing their computer screen.

Jamie Ballou 49:34

Yeah, they're not even registering and showing up.
I'm like this is a pop in class.

Brian Holmes 49:39

But what I do is I prepare a slideshow that has questions prepared and this last time we got to one question.

So there was enough conversation going on amongst the people in the classroom to keep it going and we spent, gosh, what, 45 minutes talking about panels? And then we spent another 20 minutes talking about wage statements and.

And then.

Other issues really quick, Stephanie.

Stephanie Ritz 50:15

Years ago I used to do a webinar series and I was curious if you guys are doing a post webinar survey like how was your experience or and we saw also saw a lot of the one person an employer will register but there's maybe five people there taking. It and it's like you wanna capture like those numbers too, because it's there's so many other people that.

Are taking it and that'll help boost your numbers too.

So just curious if you guys have that added in.

To post.

Brian Holmes 50:48

We do.

Maybe we have too many surveys because we have the online portion of it, and then there's survey built in after every two weeks and then there's a final survey at the end.

So we're trying to look for feedback and we've received meaningful feedback in the past because that helps improve what we're doing, right.

And what I find more interesting though, is that again, 50 people register, but only 30 show up.

And you know that that kind of dynamic, but it's part of I think the issue with being from the government.

I'm here to help stigma and also the fact that it's free and so there's no commitment. To it. But thank you for the suggestion on on the surveys.

Stephanie Ritz 51:42

Yeah, I'm just thinking that'll help. Help the numbers be better and more accurate.

Brian Holmes 51:47

Yeah.

Suzy Douglas 51:52

But do you think that promotion at the conference and at the meeting, the pre Conference meeting, I think that really helped get some interest?

So I think we would repeat that.

Brian Holmes 51:59

It defi it definitely boosted the numbers and and we had done one in since last I think last July is when last time we did one.

So we had a little bit of work to do on a few things.

We had a brand new instructors this time for workers compensation.

Basics is Jeff Francis wasn't able to be there for us.

And of course, everybody shows up for Doctor Talmage when he.

Does his portion, which is 3 weeks away, right?

Suzy Douglas 52:34

Yes, that's a good one.

I'd like to come to that one too, and I can. It's great.

All right, so return to our coordinator.

Training's going well and I'm so proud of that program because I feel like that's one thing that's very unique to Tennessee. Free training for employers on return to work,

which I think Brian's done a great job with. And Marion and Jamie work on that together so.

Kudos to you all.

Brian Holmes 52:57

That's definitely a group effort and for everything that Jamie and Marion does, it makes the world go round.

Suzy Douglas 53:05

Absolutely.

Well, I don't want to keep you all late, but I do want you again to be thinking about sessions for next year. Things that will help promote our program because probably last year and the year before, we spent a great deal of time in our meetings coming up.

With a survey to reach out to employers, and then we sent the survey, we had disappointing results.

Not very many respondents to the not many responded to the questions.

We talked about making the survey brief, and I think Nancy, you even talked about that today.

That if we send out another survey at some point, let's make it, you know.

Do you have a return work program?

How does it work?

That sort of thing.

So maybe we refine it, but I feel like we need to skip a year before we ask for that again. Maybe once we go back and retool the toolkit and revise that some, maybe we send out a survey then and remind them that we have some updated res.

For them, or something along those lines.

But I do think that maybe the survey it wasn't what I thought.

It wasn't as helpful as I thought it would be, but I think we revisit that later.

But we spent so much time on how can we promote reward over the past couple of years.

What things can we do? And you all have been so helpful.

So keep please keep coming up with those ideas. But I do think that the conference using some of the employer track of the conference session was very helpful in recruiting some new employers and promoting rewards.

So I'd like to spend some time again, maybe at the November meeting.

If that date works for you, all, I sent out a tentative date to consider November the 4th for us to meet again.

And if you all can, let me know if that works for you and if this time works for you.

1:00 central if that works.

And then I'll let everyone know. If we go with that time and so you can save the date on your calendar.

But I would like for us to be thinking ahead so that when we have that meeting, we can come back with some more feedback about maybe.

What we want to do at any suggestions or advice you have for the conference sessions and again for these employer quarterly meetings that I would love to increase attendance at those.

It varies.

It can be anything from 28 people to 60 people, depending on the topic and the speaker.

So how we can get more engagement in those and our breakout sessions?

Something we should consider at any of those 3 virtual sessions we do, and the one in person one of course.

At the pre conference.

We might think about a topic for that, one for next year.

So if you have thoughts about those things, please reach out.

And again, the we did move up one thing I didn't mention based on your feedback at the last meeting, that feedback was that the honor roll deadline was not a good deadline because it preceded it was right around the holidays and people had other things to do and.

Complete and when they were not worried about submitting their honor roll application.

So we are going to move that back like you all suggested and we will have a deadline of Halloween.

Until October 31st.

So maybe people interested in applying will be able to apply and they won't have to worry about it interfering with other plans or the holidays.

So we did revise that.

And other feedback that you will have for us.

We'd love to take that under consideration too.

See what we can do to have more applicants for the honor roll to see what we could do to have more people at some of our meetings, our employer meetings.

But I really would appreciate your help on topics and speakers and authors for report the reward report.

Because I am running into some walls trying to find candidates to do those things for us.

One thing I'm sorry, go ahead.

I thought someone else was speaking, but one thing I did wonder is if some of any of the employers on the call today would be interested in leading and facilitating one of the employer quarterly meetings.

To share whatever ideas you have for return to work with some of the employers.

Maybe new employers, maybe some of the same employers.

So think about that. If you had some success strategy. I know we've talked about that last year at the Honor Roll.

When we had the honor Roll, employees announced for the first year, we spent some time on best practices and that was great for those in attendance. But those who weren't able to attend that in person meeting maybe would like to hear from best practices in a virtual meeting.

Setting so.

Let me know about that.

Any comments or questions go ahead.

Jay Blaisdell 57:55

One suggestion that I might have with the reward report if it becomes a persistent problem trying to get.

Content you might consider going to a quarterly report rather than a every other month.

So.

Suzy Douglas 58:16

Good suggestion and maybe that's what part of what we'll look at when we look at the toolkit and the program to see if we need to do any revisions.

That's a good idea.

Any other comments, suggestions?

Stephanie Ritz 58:42

Just that it's really encouraging to hear all the positive news today. That's awesome.

Suzy Douglas 58:52

Well, I appreciate everyone's time.

All the time you all spend on helping return injured workers to work and transition them back. That is fantastic.

Thank you for your interest, your passion and all of your time.

You're so generous with your time.

Thank you all very very much.

Appreciate it. And we'll give you just a few minutes back in your afternoon and then I will send out something about the meeting and let you know the date for sure. I've gotten a few emails back, so we'll take a look at all those and see if Nove.

The 4th works, or if we should look at a different date.

Thank you all.

Have a great afternoon. Stay hydrated.

Ray, Nanette 59:28

Thanks, bye.

Brian Holmes 59:32

Thank you, Suzy.