



Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)

Value for money audit – Return To Work (RTW) Services and Nurse Consultant (NC) Program

Draft – for discussion purposes only

Summary Report | November 21, 2017

WSIB Value for money audit – RTW Services and NC Programs

Scope and approach

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) engaged Deloitte LLP (Deloitte) to conduct a value-for-money audit (VFMA) of the Return-to-Work (RTW) Services and Nurse Consulting (NC) Programs. The scope of the audit focused on the cost, efficiency and effectiveness of services delivered to support case file management and the integration and achievement of recovery and return to work outcomes. Specifically, the scope of the audit included the following areas:

- Organizational structure;
- Resource management (roles, responsibilities, communication, allocation, training and development);
- Program policies and processes;
- Information systems;
- Program related issues, challenges and risks;
- External service providers;
- Performance criteria; and
- Inter-jurisdictional comparison.

For the areas in scope noted above, Deloitte developed customized audit criteria and attributes. Additional information can be found in Appendix A. Audit criteria and attributes.

As part of this VFMA, Deloitte conducted a review of primary documentation and secondary information obtained through interviews and an inter-jurisdictional comparison. Highlights of the key activities undertaken during the VFMA are summarized below:

- Reviewed over 50 documents;
- Conducted 25 interviews; and
- Performed four inter-jurisdictional comparisons.





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VFMA Opinion

VFMA opinion:

Based on the results of our work, the RTW Services and NC Programs have demonstrated value-for-money through the delivery of its services to injured workers within the workplace health and safety system as established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, S.O. 1997, c. 16, Schedule A* (“WSIA” or “the Act”).

As per the 2016 Annual Report, the WSIB helps approximately 92% of injured workers return to work with no wage loss within 12 months of injury. It was noted that this outcome percentage has gradually decreased to 90% since Q4, 2016. Although the RTW Services and NC Programs have delivered value-for-money, we have identified 7 recommendations which, if implemented, will improve the RTW Services and NC Programs’ performance against the audit criteria and attributes assessed. These recommendations have been rated using the rating scale and categories noted in the table below.

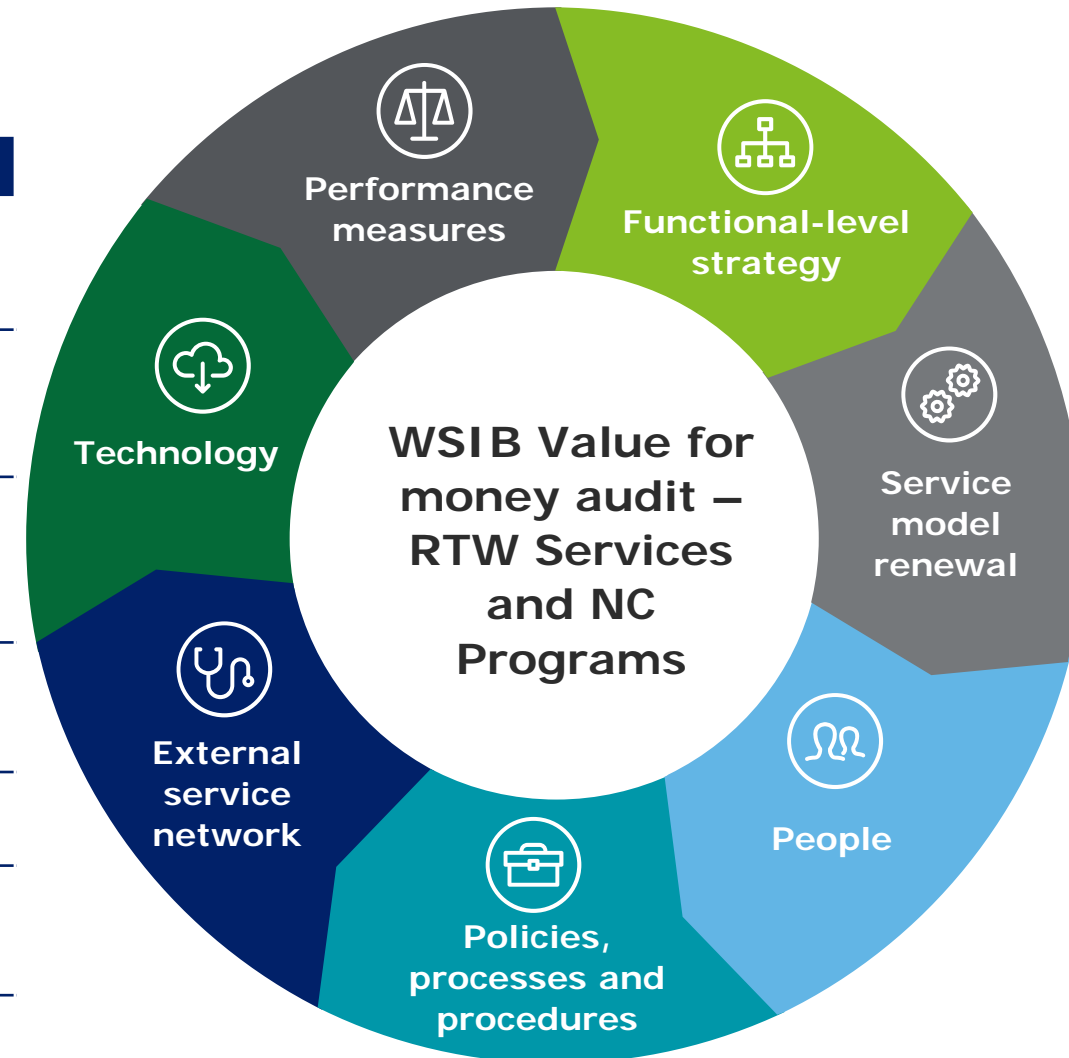
Rating	Rating categories	Number of recommendations noted
	No or little improvement required	None noted
	Some improvements required	1
	Significant improvements required	3
	Critical	3

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Key themes and recommendations

The observations and recommendations are focused on the following seven key themes:

Theme and rating	Recommendation
Core Functional-level strategy ●	Renew the strategic direction and related objectives for the RTW Division, CM Division, and HS Division to align with the strategic direction of the operations cluster
Service model renewal ●	Renew the Case Management, Complex Claims, and RTW service model in order to ensure improvement in the access and timeliness of RTW and recovery services to drive better RTW outcomes
Key Elements to Support Core People ●	Re-examine the roles and responsibilities of the RTWS, WTS and NC in order to improve the case management process and support the service model renewal in order to improve RTW and recovery outcomes
Policies, processes, and procedures ●	Renew and streamline policies, practices and procedures guidelines to strengthen decision making, accountability and to guide staff in the delivery of RTW and recovery services
External service network ●	Elevate external providers as active participants in shaping a coordinated plan for injured workers to shape RTW outcomes
Technology ●	Accelerate the use of technology as a key enabler to support the service delivery model renewal and facilitate timely communication, information sharing and decision-making
Performance measures ●	Revisit the performance measures for each Program to ensure alignment with RTW outcomes and the overall strategic direction of the Operations Cluster



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Theme: Functional-level strategy

Observations on current state

- Employees in the RTW, CM and HS Divisions have a general understanding of RTW outcomes
- Business objectives are tailored to the specific roles and used as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- The strategic direction and related objectives for the RTW Division have not been updated since 2007
- A strategic direction for the NC Program that aligns with the strategic direction of the Operations cluster and the enterprise-level strategic plan is not in place

Recommendations

Renew the strategic direction and related objectives for the RTW Division, CM Division and HS Division to align with the strategic direction of the Operations Cluster

- Ensure the strategic direction and related objectives are clearly defined, formalized and communicated to relevant stakeholders to develop a common understanding
- Ensure the strategic objectives of the Divisions are complementary to achieve the Operations Cluster vision
- Ensure that the strategic direction and related objectives are aligned with the following elements:
 - WSIB's enterprise-level strategic plan
 - The Act (WSIA)
 - Operations Cluster's long-term vision
 - Strategic direction and objectives of other divisions within the Operations Cluster

Management's response and timeline

The WSIB agrees with this recommendation.

The Operations Division will renew the strategic direction.

Q2 2018, Vice President (VP) RTW, VP Health Services, VP Case Management and VP Complex Claims

RTW and Health Care strategies are currently under development and will lay out the strategic direction for RTW and Health Services for the coming years. The new strategies and plan will be communicated and delivered.

The new strengthened RTW and Nurse Consultant objectives will align to:

- Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA)
- WSIB's enterprise-level strategic plan
- Operations Cluster long term vision
- Strategic direction and objectives of all Branches within the Operations Cluster

The objectives will be communicated to all internal stakeholders.

Q4 2018, VP RTW and VP Health Services

WSIB Value for money audit – RTW Services and NC Programs

Theme: Service model renewal

Observations on current state

- From 2008 - 2010, the organization developed and implemented a new Service Delivery Model, supported by new roles, business processes and policies. As a result of these reviews, the programs transformed the people and process elements of the model to enhance the focus on return to work and recovery
- In 2016, WSIB implemented ACES to better support case and account management activities. In modernizing its systems, the new technology has provided the WSIB with an opportunity to re-examine existing business processes and roles to better integrate and streamline services in support of workers and employers, and further drive improvements in return to work and recovery outcomes
- Lack of formalized case risk, urgency and complexity considerations for case triaging and segmentation
- NC Referral Reasons not used on a regular basis
- Process for assigning cases to the RTW Services and NC Programs is variable and can lead to inefficiencies

Recommendations

Renew the Case Management, Complex Claims, and RTW service model in order to ensure improvement in the access and timeliness of RTW and recovery services to drive better RTW outcomes

- Case triaging to inform case segmentation by risk, urgency and/or complexity
- Considerations include:
 - Type of injury
 - Worker characteristics/risk factors
 - New or repeat injured worker
 - Pre-existing conditions
- Streamlined approach for the assignment and management of cases

Management's response and timeline

The WSIB agrees with the recommendation.

The WSIB will undertake a renewal of the current Service Model including opportunities to leverage key injury/illness claim characteristics to triage and streamline the assignment and management of cases.

Q4 2018, VP RTW, VP Health Services, VP Case Management and VP Complex Claims

WSIB Value for money audit – RTW Services and NC Programs

Theme: People

Observations on current state

- Delays and inefficiencies in processing of some cases as Case Managers are required to make all decisions within the scope of the entitlement claim
- Internal and external confusion in the roles and responsibilities of RTWSs, WTSs and NCs
- Roles and skillsets of NCs are not effectively optimized
- Absence of clinical oversight for the NC role from an operational perspective
- Use of Professional Practice Leads (PPLs) when encountering challenging or complex cases
- Administrative tasks do not optimize the time and efficiency of skilled employees
- Ad-hoc recruitment of specialized backgrounds and skillsets
- Lack of coordination in the offerings of training
- Online training platforms are not optimized for refresher training programs

Recommendations

Re-examine the roles and responsibilities of the RTWS, WTS and NC in order to improve the case management process and support the service model renewal in order to improve RTW and recovery outcomes

- Decision-making responsibilities for program staff aligned with revised roles and responsibilities
- Consolidation of the RTWS and WTS roles to drive efficiencies in achieving RTW outcomes
- Governance and reporting structure changes to support service model renewal
- Delegation of administrative tasks to other roles in the organization
- Increased utilization of clinical expertise
- Proactive recruitment strategies based on workforce needs with a focus on specialized skillsets
- Integrated training plan across programs
- Ongoing learning opportunities via online training modules

Management's response and timeline

The WSIB agrees with the recommendation.

The WSIB will:

- Evaluate a governance model and reporting structure to support the service model renewal.
- Undertake a re-examination of the roles and responsibilities to improve the RTW and recovery outcomes to support the service model renewal.
- Continue to identify administrative tasks which may be automated or assigned with the support of appropriate processes and protocols to appropriate roles.
- Identify ways to increase the utilization of clinical expertise.
- Develop an integrated training plan to support the service model renewal and the roles and responsibilities transpire.
- Develop a strategic recruitment plan to enable proactive hiring based on workforce needs

Q4 2018, VP RTW, VP Health Services and VP Case Management

WSIB Value for money audit – RTW Services and NC Programs

Theme: Policies, processes and procedures

Observations on current state	Recommendations	Management's response and timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical thinking is impeded due to the volume of process-related documents and measurement of expected adherence to process• Regional differences in the types of collaboration between program staff and Case Managers resulting in varying approaches to case management• Inconsistent follow-ups with injured workers post-RTW create a perception with the injured worker that the plan is not monitored to completion• Operational policies not reviewed and updated in accordance with the five-year review cycle	<p>Renew and streamline policies, practices and procedures guidelines to strengthen decision-making, accountability and to guide staff in the delivery of RTW and recovery services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure process related documentation is principles and outcomes based• Multidisciplinary approach to the management of cases• Review of follow-up principles post-RTW to inform where further follow-up with the worker and employer may be needed• Develop, communicate and monitor a WSIB policy review schedule and update policy guidelines to enable WSIB to have updated and aligned policies to support the RTW strategy.	<p>The WSIB agrees with the recommendation.</p> <p>The WSIB will conduct a process review to focus on RTW and Recovery outcomes. Q4 2018, VP OTSB</p> <p>A process optimization review is currently being conducted and will include processes related to the RTW and Nurse Consultant roles. The review will include a validation and analysis of the current state processes to explore efficiencies and to reduce the burden on internal staff and our stakeholders.</p> <p>The review of Work Reintegration policies in 2016-17 was put on hold, as it was considered more practical to await the results of this Value for Money Audit before proceeding with the policy review. The Operational Policy Branch will partner with the RTW Branch to develop a plan for reviewing the current Work Reintegration policies. Q4 2018, VP Policy & Consultation Services Division and VP RTW</p>

WSIB Value for money audit – RTW Services and NC Programs

Theme: External service network

Observations on current state	Recommendations	Management's response and timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worker perception that recommendations made by WSIB do not always meet their needs due to limited interactions with external health providers• Reluctance to use external job placement providers to identify job placement opportunities due to the lack of successful placements and perceived effectiveness• Lack of availability of resources which causes delays, particularly in remote locations	<p>Elevate external providers as active participants in shaping a coordinated plan for injured workers to shape RTW outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrated case management in collaboration with external healthcare providers• Build on, leverage and engage specialty clinics• Conduct third-party review of external job placement providers to determine effectiveness	<p>The WSIB agrees with the recommendation.</p> <p>The WSIB will continue to build on the integrated approach which exists in the and Regional Evaluation Centre (REC) programs to actively engage primary health care providers in RTW and recovery outcomes for their patients.</p> <p>Q1 2018, VP Health Services</p> <p>The WSIB also agrees to have a third party review of the external placement providers to ensure their effectiveness.</p> <p>Q1 2019, VP RTW Program</p>

WSIB Value for money audit – RTW Services and NC Programs

Theme: Technology

Observations on current state

- Centralized and user-friendly ACES was configured to automate processes in their current state versus significantly improving the functionality to meet the needs of the customers and accelerating one's return to work
- Identified and reported enhancement opportunities to ACES, including case triaging capabilities
- Although ACES is centralized, information and data is not integrated thereby limiting trend analysis and forecasting capabilities
- Use of technology in the current service delivery model is not optimized
- Manual process for making referrals to external service providers impacting timeliness and accuracy of referrals
- Quality of current reporting capabilities to assess performance is not robust and reporting capabilities don't exist in all areas

Recommendations

Accelerate the use of technology as a key enabler to support the service model renewal and facilitate timely communication, information sharing and decision-making

- Prioritize the implementation of ACES improvements in relation to objectives and desired outcomes
- Explore alternative technologies in order to drive efficiencies in day-to-day tasks and responsibilities (e.g., video-conferencing, robotic process automation, e-consultation, improved website functionalities, etc.)
- Streamlined referral process to external service providers
- Develop and enhance reporting capabilities to better assess performance

Management's response and timeline

The WSIB agrees with this recommendation.

WSIB will continue to advance the use of technology as a key enabler. The Operations Division currently has a process and structure in place to prioritize ACES enhancements. However, this approach will be revisited to ensure the enhancements are prioritized based on specific criteria that will be developed to ensure alignment with the corporate scorecard and desired outcomes. **Q1 2018, VP OPTSB**

WSIB Value for money audit – RTW Services and NC Programs

Theme: Performance measures

Observations on current state	Recommendations	Management's response and timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A component of the RTW rate calculation is conducted manually, driving inefficiencies in the calculation process• RTW rate calculation is dependent on the results of an audit conducted in 2011 and have not been reaffirmed• Qualitative and quantitative measures on program scorecards to evaluate individual performance of staff• Individual performance measures do not drive the desired behaviours and actions towards the RTW outcomes• Proportion of NC workload is not tracked and measured	<p>Revisit the performance measures for each Program to ensure alignment with RTW outcomes and the overall strategic direction of the Operations Cluster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a mandatory requirement for the use of case closure codes in ACES• Conduct quality assurance audits on the RTW rate calculation on a regular basis• Improve effectiveness of Program measures with an emphasis on outcome versus process oriented measures• Collaborate and coordinate measures across divisions to ensure alignment with RTW outcomes and balanced nature of performance measures• Reinforce the NC, RTW and WTS referral codes to ensure work performed is accurately captured to inform performance data	<p>The WSIB agrees with the recommendation.</p> <p>The WSIB will conduct quality audits that will ensure that RTW results are coded and accurately reported in the RTW rate calculation.</p> <p>Q1 2018, Strategic Analytics</p> <p>The performance measures for the RTW, NC and CM roles will be revisited in relation to the renewed strategic direction of operations.</p> <p>Q1 2018, VP RTW and VP Case Management</p>



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