

# OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE PROGRAMS – A BENEFIT FOR MANY EMPLOYERS NOW MORE THAN EVER!

## BENEFITS OF AN OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE CLINIC

### BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES

Specialists in workplace medicine

Quick and convenient care

### BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

Focus on lowering health care costs

Customer-service oriented

Corporate compliance

### BENEFITS FOR INSURERS

Focused specialists



Today's employers are tasked more than ever with keeping expenses at a minimum while meeting their responsibilities to customers, employees, and their own business. When company leaders consider "health care" and "cutting expenditures," human resource managers and executives often think traditional employee insurance benefits are the only medical expenses that will affect a company's bottom line.

But this usually is not the case. Large and small companies have realized the unique benefits of medical clinics and programs which engage in occupational medicine. Though occupational medicine offers more services to a company than traditional medical insurance provides, it can actually cost less in the long run.

Occupational medicine focuses exclusively on the medical needs required by employers for their personnel; it provides work injury care and preventative services such as drug-free and safety programs, corporate health services and the care of medical professionals who practice a variety of ergonomic, therapeutic and medical specialties

that are specific to employees, companies and industries.

Professional occupational medicine has become a medical specialty over the past several decades, with NAOHP being the leader in educating and training occupational health professionals with the business and operations of this industry for the last 35 years.

This specialty has developed a full complement of services for employers including W/C injury treatment, drug and alcohol screening and management programs, vaccinations, toxicology, exposure evaluations and specialized physicals for drivers and other personnel engaged in hazardous work. Programs also focus on hearing conservation, ergonomic evaluations, safety and education, occupational training and much more.

Occupational medicine is a complex approach to health care. While its practitioners have expertise in industrial medicine, they also study individual company workplaces and specific treatment requirements and protocols. The specific paperwork for corporate

and governmental compliance compounds the complexity of modern health care; each state has different paperwork and treatment requirements, payment systems, referral and case management processes, etc.

Occupational medicine clinics know how to navigate these complex seas; they also can guide patients through the maze of state worker's compensation programs.

While addressing the above, occupational medicine programs also remain acutely aware of time pressures. Insurers, employers, and health care providers know the importance of getting an injured employee back to work as soon as possible.

Because of all that an occupational medicine clinic provides, insurance companies largely approve of them; insurance providers understand the benefits of this more comprehensive approach to health care. So what are some of the benefits?

### **BENEFITS FOR INSURERS**

- **Focused specialists:** Professional occupational health programs are specialists in the field of industrial and workplace medicine. They are available to discuss cases with insurance carriers, they understand the importance of communication and they appreciate the significance of return-to-work programs and state worker's compensation guidelines.

### **BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES**

- **Specialists in workplace medicine:** Occupational health providers are usually specialists in occupational or industrial medicine or are primary care physicians who have acquired occupational health certification through state boards.
- **Quick and convenient care:** Most professional occupational medicine clinics do not treat patients off the street in an "urgent care" setting. This frees up their medical personnel to focus on workplace care problems, which results in timely services for employees. An employee can thus return to work more quickly.

### **BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS**

- **A focus on lowering health care costs:** Occupational medicine providers are aware of the increasing financial pressures on their company clients, big and small. Therefore, they keep injury cases to a minimum of visits and schedule only appropriate services.
- **Customer-service oriented:** Occupational medicine emphasizes service because their clients are companies of all sizes. Addressing a small company's health care needs is quite different than working with a large company; therefore, customer service must be comprehensive and flexible. Many clinics have their physicians regularly call or

meet with employers to discuss patient care.

- **Corporate compliance:** Occupational health programs assist companies with corporate compliance programs for driver's physicals, drug and alcohol screening programs, OSHA requirements, hearing conservation programs, etc.

They also often act as case managers by coordinating all aspects of a patient's care. In so doing, they can help save health care dollars over the long term. Occupational medicine provides a unique service within the medical world. Just as you would not visit an orthopedic surgeon with a kidney problem, workplace health concerns do not belong in just any health care facility.

Occupational medicine performs extraordinary juggling acts to provide consistent and quality service; the clinics simultaneously offer good medicine, customer service, compliance information, paperwork services and training programs -- not only for patients but for employers, insurance carriers and governmental entities as well.

As medical costs continue to rise and companies consider the health of their organizations, partnering with an occupational medicine program continues to be the best decision a company leader can make.



Progressing with the ongoing changes, NAOHP remains the core development of occupational health, providing occupational health professionals and providers the education, training, and tools necessary to have a successful occupational health program.

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