

Occupational Medicine Newsletter

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www.tcohr.com

Positive Results for Patient's and Employers!

Fitness for Duty Exams

When can employers require an employee to undergo a *fitness-for-duty* exam? The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) prevents an employer from requiring a medical examination, inquiring as to whether an employee has a disability, or inquiring as to the nature or severity of any disability, **UNLESS** the inquiry or examination is "job related and consistent with business necessity". (42 USC Section 12112(c)(4)(A)).

A *fitness-for-duty* examination seeks to determine if a current employee, returning from illness or injury, is able to safely and efficiently perform the essential functions of her or his job.

Fitness-for-duty exams can also provide an employer with information that will help identify reasonable accommodations to return the employee to the job.

Fitness-for-duty exams can involve psychiatric, medical, or physical conditions. TCOHR performs *fitness-for-duty* exams only for medical and physical conditions which can be assessed either by a physician, physical therapist, or both.

Before a *fitness-for-duty* can be scheduled, it is essential that TCOHR receives all of the relevant medical records from the employee's personal physician and any specialists who have treated the employee's condition.

Functional job descriptions are also critical in helping to determine work readiness. TCOHR

clinicians performing the *fitness-for-duty*, thoroughly review job descriptions in advance of the exam, ensuring the most thorough and accurate recommendations.

Not all records or medical findings are made available to an employer, for example, if they are unrelated to the purpose of the *fitness-for-duty* or because of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Once the employer receives the *fitness-for-duty* recommendation from TCOHR, options include: 1) Returning the employee to work, with or without modified duty or reasonable accommodations; 2) returning the employee to a different position; or 3) medically terminate the employee. In cases where neither a physical or medical condition are involved, an employer may pursue a psychiatric diagnosis or on-the-job, remedial guidance to improve job performance.

Online Documents

Download forms from
www.tcohr.com.

Click on "*Downloadable Forms and Sample Reports*"

- * Respirator Questionnaire
- * Asbestos Questionnaire
- * Employer Authorization & Referral Form
- * Medical Surveillance Exam Authorization
- * Health Information Disclosure Form
(To transfer records from another medical provider)

Flu Vaccine

In just six weeks, influenza cases will begin their seasonal climb for the year. Incidence reports are highest from mid-December through late March, peaking in early February. Track flu incidents by state (or country) at

www.google.org/flutrends/intl/en_us/

Flu (continued)

The “flu” influenza virus is a serious, contagious, respiratory illness. TCOHR will begin receiving flu vaccine in early September. While the 2009 flu vaccine will not contain vaccine for H1N1 (aka, swine flu), avoiding the seasonal flu will reduce your risk of developing the most serious effects of H1N1 should you become exposed.

A limited production of the H1N1 vaccine is being produced for high-risk groups. Initially, 160 million doses of swine flu vaccine should be available in October, with two required doses per person.

According to the Associated Press, “Government and company-run studies of thousands of volunteers will begin in a few weeks to see if a low-dose shot really works, or if people will need higher-dose shots, further cutting the early available supply.”

To schedule your on-site seasonal flu vaccine clinic for this Fall, email info@tcchr.com today for more information.

Staff Feature: Mike Gallagher, FNP

Mike is a Nurse Practitioner who works in our Blaine clinic. He is a licensed, independent practitioner. NP’s have demonstrated mastery in a range of skills sets such as Family Practice, Ophthalmology, Emergency or Occupational Medicine.

Specialties Mike draws upon for his work with TCOHR patients include dermatology, orthopedics, psychology, trauma and pain management. One of the challenges he enjoys is finding ways to meld medical care with the regulatory demands in order to

fulfill the requirements of the Workers’ Comp system.

With a range of experiences in Emergency Departments, urgent care centers, and in Occupational Medicine, Mike enjoys the unpredictability. “I never know what I might see next. I have to be good at everything. I need to be able to create a bond; a working relationship in any circumstance in order to provide care.”

Partnership Requires Communication

In the partnership between TCOHR and your organization, we want to be sure that your protocols are up-to-date. Drop us a line when Work Comp insurers or TPA’s change. Let us know if the person(s) who should receive reports change, or if you want to change the type of reports being received, or change the report format from fax to email.

Concerns, questions, kudos or ideas you would like to put to us? We want to hear from you! info@tcchr.com

We know that like those of us who work with Mike, his patients appreciate both his clinical skills and calm approach.

Stretch of the Day - Shoulder

For employees who work with their arms out in front of them, including people keying on a computer, keeping their shoulders

flexible helps to reduce strain and fatigue.

The *Posterior Capsule Stretch* is easy to do.



Press a hand against the elbow, pulling it back towards the shoulder. Hold for 2 – 5 seconds, then alternate.

How are we doing?

In June, we served workers from 94 new employers! Thank-you!

Let us know if we can improve our service in any way.