

New Vocational Support Services Program Helps Cigna Customers Manage Their Health, Remain Productive and Stay on the Job

PHILADELPHIA, January 18, 2012 - Every year, more than three million American workers take family and medical leave because of difficulty with chronic conditions such back pain and carpal tunnel syndrome¹. As part of Cigna's ongoing effort to help customers prevent injury or illness and stay healthy on the job, the company created the Vocational Support Services program. The program can help people prevent future workplace absences or make it easier for employees to return from medical leave sooner.

The Vocational Support Services program is available at no additional cost to employers who use [Cigna Leave Solutions®](#). By monitoring medical leave requests and claims for employees currently on leave, Cigna can proactively identify individuals who may benefit from assistance. Once an employee voluntarily joins the program, a nationally-certified Cigna vocational counselor evaluates an employee's capabilities, the required job functions, and the working environment. The counselor then coordinates with both the employee and the employee's manager to create a personalized plan, which can include workplace accommodations, such as providing ergonomic equipment.

"It's not uncommon for employees to report [musculoskeletal issues](#), such as back pain, and then because of the nature of their job, to request intermittent time off from work," **said Dr. Robert Anfield, chief medical officer for Cigna's disability programs.** "However, time away from work doesn't always resolve the underlying health issue. A preventive, hands-on approach can direct the customer into the right program or supply the kind of equipment needed to avoid a longer absence."

NextEra Energy, a leading clean energy company, employs approximately 15,000 people with varying job characteristics - from sedentary to standing, and from lifting heavy equipment to sitting at workstation typing on a computer.

"At NextEra Energy, we take the health and well-being of our employees very seriously. That's one driver of our business' success," said **Alyssa Coleman, Benefits Consultant, NextEra Energy.** "Employees who are healthy are more productive, which in turn improves their ability to deliver excellent customer service. Cigna's Vocational Support Services help us by identifying employees who can benefit from this type of counseling, and makes recommendations to prevent injuries that might lead them to miss work."

NextEra Energy used Cigna's Vocational Support Services to help employees achieve greater comfort in performing their daily work responsibilities. Best of all, the accommodations paid for by Cigna helped employees avoid a leave of absence to help deal with their condition.

As an **example of the program's strengths, a power line crew foreman** was diagnosed with cancer and hypertension, and had had a surgical hernia repair. His job requires prolonged standing and he experienced fatigue and pain in his feet. A Cigna vocational counselor recommended a standing mat and insoles for his work boots. The counselor also advised the customer to take microbreaks and perform regular stretching during the work day, as well as making sure he uses proper lifting techniques. As a result of these simple actions and vocational counseling, the customer reported less fatigue and felt much more comfortable performing his duties.

About CIGNA

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1 US Department of Labor RFI - FMLA 2007 Update; 2 - U.S. Census Bureau, December 2005