

RETAIN CONNECTICUT

Retaining
Employment
and Talent After
Injury/Illness
Network



In partnership with UConn and CT DOL for worker's health

Issue 5 | Mar 12, 2021



Hello providers and office staff –

The RETAIN-CT team is grateful for your continued effort to not only recruit patients but to integrate a stay-at-work/return-to-work (SAW/RTW) focus into your practice. Thank you for helping **ALL** working patients look forward to better work outcomes after pain or injury.

An important reminder: please note that we are **accepting participants through June 30, 2021**. Our criteria includes **ALL working patients** (patients who consider themselves in the workforce as they may be between jobs) and not just Worker's Comp. Many thanks to one of our diligent RETAIN-CT clinic office staff for making the bold recommendation that we grab your attention regarding our expanded eligibility criteria!

As of today, because of you, we have enrolled 76 patients. Keep 'em coming!

Thirty-seven patients have worked with our RTW Navigator Team. Please read a Success Story about one participant's journey working with Jill in the text below. Enjoy!

PATIENT TESTIMONIAL SUCCESS STORY

Jennifer is feeling more hopeful after a year of unemployment and disability due an auto accident that turned her life upside down. The following heartfelt story is a participant’s self-reported testimonial reflecting on her experience working with our RTW Navigator and the RETAIN-CT Case Management team.



“While visiting my physiatrist, for my lumbar injury, she handed me an information packet about RETAIN-CT. I understood this to be a program that helped people get back to work after musculoskeletal injury, and I applied.

I am 50 years old and became the victim of a vehicle accident a year ago. Not only did my harmony change, but I had to stop working. How could I return to waitressing or my post-construction cleaning business with damage to my lower back? I had lumbar discs that did not get better after months and months of treatment and physical therapy. How will I pay my bills? How long will my credit cards keep me going?

After being referred to RETAIN-CT, I received a call from the Work Navigator, Jill. My life changed the day I spoke with her. I kept thinking I would get better and go back to serving while the months kept passing. While speaking with the Work Navigator, we realized that I have so many transferrable skills, and that I could get an office job that would prevent further injury. I did not think changing my career path, at this time in my life, was an option. Jill referred me to the American Job Center (AJC), which I never

heard of, and I enrolled in one-on-one services. I worked with a Career Advisor and the Work Navigator to develop an Individual Employment Plan. The best news was, there was a grant for training, and I had a choice in it! My head spun with possibilities! I chose to return to my Graphic Arts roots and chose the Adobe Illustrator course. My Work Navigator/Cheerleader, with a team of advocates, got me back in school! I cried more than once with gratitude. I now have a new direction and a new sense of pride; and it happened in less than two months That is when I realized I had received an incredible gift when I joined RETAIN CT.

Moreover, I was elated for the first time in a long time. (It was very depressing being in pain, not having enough money for bills, and having a general depression over the changes in my life since the injury.) Suddenly, I was rewriting my resume. Job applications asking if I could lift 40 lbs. were replaced with appointments, phone calls and conversations catered to my employment history, talents, work experience and interests.

Lastly, I would like to share that I am more than 50% through a very intricate course that will offer the most up-to-date certification there is for graphic design. I hope to combine my graphic design skills with my journalism background. We will see what happens, however, I do not see me needing to be in pain to earn a paycheck anymore! That was the hard truth before I met RETAIN-CT.

If I were asked to describe the RETAIN-CT program, I would say the program can change your life - if you want it, if you go with it, and trust your Work Navigator/Cheerleader and her team of advocates. I am living proof!

I thank all those involved - on so many levels - for literally, Giving me a Chance." JW

NEWS UPDATE

RETAIN-CT Project ECHO

CHCACT facilitated the first “Project ECHO” meetings for the RETAIN-CT program on February 11 and March 11, with 20 volunteer RETAIN providers. The Project ECHO model is a revolutionary guided-practice model that combines expert presentations with

innovative tele-mentoring and case presentation to share expertise across medical teams. Thank you to RETAIN-CT team members for facilitating the initial meeting and to Dr. Glenn Pransky from the UMass Medical School, who was an expert presenter. Monthly meetings will continue with the existing RETAIN-CT Project ECHO cohort (next meeting April 8), but if you would like to be put on the waiting list for the next Project ECHO cycle, please contact Janet Caldwell Cover at 860-679-6389.



Welcome Select Physical Therapy to our Provider network.

Select PT has embraced the RETAIN-CT program and research study. Five Select PT offices in the Hartford or North Central Region have teamed up with RETAIN-CT to train Physical Therapists and office staff to better assist any patients who may be having difficulties working, or returning to work after an injury, illness or disability.

Kirstin Lane, PT, DPT, CDN, CEAS, Regional Manager of WorkStrategies, Select Medical, shared this about their philosophy of care and the benefit of participating in RETAIN-CT.

“At Select Physical Therapy, we strive to use the best practices to improve our patients’ quality of lives, including using psychologically informed therapy in conjunction with traditional PT/OT in a person centric model of care, not as an injury. Despite our best efforts we know that the best care encompasses a team centered around the patient. We believe that RETAIN will identify best practices as to ways to coordinate that team and the team’s care and caring. We’re excited for the opportunity to work with

the RETAIN program to create positive change for not only our patients as they recover but for the future of our workforce as a whole.”

OUTREACH CORNER

Who qualifies for RETAIN-CT?

Here is a quick review of the participant qualifications.

- 1) Workers/patients aged 18-65
- 2) Part-time, full-time or self-employed
- 3) Experiencing musculoskeletal pain, injury or disease
- 4) Reduced ability to stay-at-work (SAW) or return-to-work (RAW)
- 5) Volunteers as a research participant
- 6) Speaks English (accepting Spanish in Phase 2 later this year)
- 7) Willing to speak with RTW Navigator if randomly selected. (2-4 hrs) in 6 months
- 8) Not currently collecting Social Security Disability (SSDI)
- 9) Agrees to answer 21 questions and sign consent form in the provider's office
- 10) Willing to complete three more surveys in 6 months

We are here to help in your recruitment effort with tips, hand-outs and other tools.

If you have any questions about recruitment, please contact Janet at 860-697-6389, caldwellcover@uchc.edu

RESEARCH LITERATURE



Sound Ergonomic Advice to Share with At Home Workers

Working from Home the Husky Way

By Thomas Varghese, UConn Health Ergonomist, at tvarghese@uchc.edu.

[Go to article link](#)

Factors Affecting Return to Work After Injury or Illness: Best Evidence Synthesis of Systematic Reviews

Cancelliere and colleagues (2016) reviewed the literature to identify common factors that predict RTW across different injury conditions. Fifty-six articles were included in this review, and half of them focused on musculoskeletal conditions. The other half focused on a combination of mental health or cardiovascular conditions, stroke, cancer, and multiple sclerosis. The authors found both positive and negative factors affecting RTW outcomes. Positive factors associated with RTW outcomes focused on personal and environmental aspects, specific intervention components, and early employer engagement were. Personal aspects included higher education, socioeconomic status, higher optimism, and severity level of injury. Environmental aspects included stakeholder participation in the RTW process, work accommodation, and RTW coordination. Interventions with occupational training, education, psychological treatment, and outpatient service components were found to be associated with positive RTW outcomes. Early intervention by the employer within the first six weeks after injury was also linked to positive RTW outcomes. Factors associated with negative RTW outcomes included “older age, being female, higher pain or disability, depression, higher physical work demands, previous sick leave.” The authors conclude that understanding factors that predict RTW across injury conditions may help employers and health care professionals facilitate the RTW process..

Report available: [Cancelliere, C., Donovan, J., Stochkendahl, M. J., Biscardi, M., Ammendolia, C., Myburgh, C., & Cassidy, J. D. \(2016\). Factors affecting return to work after injury or illness: best evidence synthesis of systematic reviews. *Chiropractic & Manual Therapies*, 24\(1\), 32–55.](#)

**Thank you to all of our providers and staff for your support.
Dr William Shaw, UConn Health, RETAIN-CT Project Director
Karen Quesnel, CT Department of Labor, RETAIN-CT Project Lead**

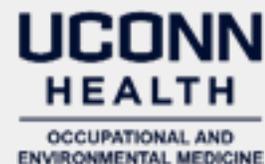
Questions or referrals to interested providers?

Please email us

at caldwellcover@uchc.edu or wshaw@uchc.edu.

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