



First Source

The FRR Quarterly Newsletter

Dear Industry Colleagues and Friends,

FRR has had a busy year thus far - midstream through we have already held several seminars and have introduced additional services.

We hope that those of you who have attended our Seminar(s), departed with some new information and tips to assist you in your daily workflow and enjoyed catching up with us and colleagues. For those who have not yet been able to attend one of our education in-services this year, we hope to see you next time! We will continue to keep you apprised of upcoming events.

We have recently added new services to our lineup, and are pleased to provide details of those services in this newsletter ... Employee Wellness, Vocational Evaluation & Expert Witness Testimony in Divorce Litigation, and a Physician Workers' Compensation Liaison Program.

Included in this issue, is also enlightening information from Attorney John Rufe of Franklin & Prokopik, P.C. Many thanks to Attorney Rufe for this interesting and informative article!

Please do read on - We hope you enjoy this issue of First Source.



-The FRR Team

In This Issue

[WCC Proposes a Fee Schedule for Pharmaceuticals](#)

[Assistive Technology](#)

[COMAR Regulations - One Year Later](#)

[Worksite Early Intervention Nurse](#)

[Healthy Strides - Ice Cream!](#)

[Vocational Services Used in Divorce Settlements](#)

[Physician Workers' Comp Liaison Program](#)

[Avocado Recipe](#)

MD WCC Proposes a Fee Schedule for Pharmaceuticals

Kaija Blalock, BSN, RN, JD, MSCC

Field Medical Case Management Supervisor/Medicare Set-Aside Coordinator



As many of our readers know, The Maryland Workers' Compensation Commission's Medical Fee Guide historically has not addressed or "valued" fees for prescription medication. Maryland Regulations also allow a licensed physician, whose been

approved by the Board of Physician Quality Assurance, to dispense prescription medication to a patient when "a pharmacy is not conveniently available to the patient."

The Maryland Workers' Compensation Commission (MD WCC) has identified a disparity in reimbursement rates between physician-dispensed and pharmacy-dispensed prescriptions. Physician-dispensers paid nearly double or triple the price paid to a pharmacy for the same prescription. As a result, the WCC has proposed new regulations to establish a uniform pricing schedule. The proposed regulation can be viewed via a link on the MD WCC's website (<http://www.wcc.state.md.us/>).

The regulation provides for a reimbursement rate for brand name drugs that are tied to the Average Wholesale Price (AWP). For generic drugs, reimbursement will be tied to the Generic Equivalent Average Price (GEAP). These standards would also be used in calculating reimbursement for

"repackaged" or compounded drugs, in which case the AWP or GEAP used would be that of the primary underlying active drug product.

Join Our Mailing List!

Let us know if you're interested in future events/seminars!

Assistive Technology

John P. Rufe, Esquire of Franklin & Prokopik, P.C. · www.fandpnet.com



How are you faring with reasonable turn-around times in your vocational rehabilitation claims? The dragging economy and the reality of job competition in the marketplace, together with the challenges of a Claimant with physical restrictions, have undoubtedly impacted the success, and cost, of both placement and the time it takes to achieve it.

This reality has also not been lost on the administrative agencies, and we are seeing more and more instances of the expansion in the medical treatment context of the meaning of "other appliances," "other apparatus," and "other services," under the applicable statutes. This is further generated by marked advances in technology. There are limits which the courts have placed on mandating such approaches, in order to ensure that employers are not unfairly required to provide items that are not directly related to the injury. It is also a touchy subject when moving into the vocational rehabilitation context.

When it comes to voluntary approaches, the situation often becomes one of deciding whether the cost of long delay in the rehabilitation process may be reduced by taking advantage of these new technologies. In today's world, these include both hardware and software opportunities. From iPads and smartphones, to voice and reading technologies, these advances have afforded an opportunity to place a worker who may have limited skill sets generally, or have previously only been employable in an industrial setting. Pre-loaded software allows the use of hardware devices that more easily allow the employee to 'walk-through' the job task step by step, to operate equipment, to process data, to direct other tasks, to monitor progress, and to manage other employees; all either remotely or on-site.

Those with decreased mobility have access to devices that, with minimal movement or voice commands, can direct or execute a job task. There is literacy software, voice-to-text software such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking, text-to-voice software such as Natural Reader, modified keyboards and Wii-like devices and joysticks. These permit functioning in the workplace, whether it be in the office or on the plant floor, and whether the disability involves physical, cognitive, speech, or hearing limitations. The out-of-the-box nature of these technologies means that the employer no longer has as much concern over extended training time that would otherwise discourage the hiring of a worker with physical restrictions.

While some technologies have been around for some time in their development state, bugs and other limitations have bred caution in relying upon them. Today, with powerful processing capability, miniaturization and technical development, the reliability of these methods has increased exponentially. Registered vocational counselors have a keen eye for the job market, not only for job availability generally, but in relationships developed with employers across the state which have become versed in the capabilities these technologies can afford them in their business. A worker who has years of experience to bring to bear in a given field, with some technological assistance, can be quite an asset to their bottom line; in job knowledge, maturity and experience, and ability to manage others. In the appropriate case, a vocational assessment should include the possibility of assistive technology. Oftentimes this will open new avenues that can result in faster, more successful vocational rehabilitation results. It benefits the employee and can secure a more timely conclusion of the claim.

John P. Rufe is a Principal in the law firm Franklin & Prokopik, and represents employers, insurers and self-insured entities in Maryland & the District of Columbia
jrufe@fandpnet.com

Vocational Rehabilitation in Maryland - One Year Post "New" COMAR Regulations

Samantha Kieley, MA, CRC, CDMS, CCM
VP and Director of Vocational Case Management

It appears we will soon need to cease referring to the COMAR Amendments 14.09.05 as "new" regulations, as it has already been a little over one year since their establishment. How have these changes affected the provision of vocational rehabilitation services within the state of Maryland? Have you experienced positive, negative or indifferent outcomes since implementing



use of the "new" forms, selection process, dispute resolution steps or electronic filing requirements since last April?

We at FRR, Inc. have adapted to implementing these regulations, and are greatly enjoying the opportunities which have been afforded to us in introducing some new (and re-introducing our more seasoned) Vocational Case Managers to Claims Professionals and members of the attorney communities. We have been involved in highly productive conference calls with duty-Commissioners, often resolving disputes outside of formal hearings and saving time and expenses for all. With the smooth procedures for Vocational Case Manager selection and processing of Rehabilitation Plans/agreements, we are finding that our vocational service provision is well-received, promptly custom-tailored to individual needs/expectations and, ultimately, of greater benefit to ALL case-involved parties.

Wellness Program includes Worksite Early Intervention Nurse

Andee Maloney, RN
Nurse Case Manager



Since January 2011, FRR has played a part in an Eastern Shore company's Employee Wellness Program and helped reduce worker injuries.

Spartech Corporation, a leading producer of plastic products including polymeric compounds, concentrates, custom extruded sheet rock, rollstock products and packaging technologies, wanted to ensure their workers were safe and provided convenient, regular access to a healthcare provider. They chose FRR Nurse Case Manager, Andee Maloney, RN, to provide Early Intervention Nurse services.

Alternating a morning or evening each week, Andee is able to provide coverage for both day/night shift employees. Employees have access to her as she walks rounds on the production floor, as well as individually to discuss any personal health concerns. The program is more than case management - FRR is Spartech's partner in ensuring the safety of workers. This service includes:

- Providing educational/reference materials on relevant health issues/safety precautions
- Accompanying injured workers to an Occupational Health Clinic for initial evaluation and follow-up of injuries
- Consulting with employees regarding their work stations, determining if ergonomic changes are necessary
- Determining if work duties are appropriate for modified/light duty recommendations by the treating physician
- As needed, performing on-site evaluations of any injuries and providing first aid

Since the program's inception, Andee has met with plant management weekly to review newly reported incidents, as well as follow the progress of previously reported injured workers. Making recommendations within the scope of practice, she has demonstrated a regular cost savings as determined by a detailed report provided to Spartech management monthly.

Contact your Account Manager for more information on this program and how we can customize a program that suits your needs.

Healthy Strides

Calling All Ice Cream Lovers Out There!

Sarah Greenwood
Account Manager



There's nothing like a nice dish of ice cream on a sunny day. But every time I dig into that carton, I wonder...is this helping me keep those pounds off that I worked so hard on earlier in the year? The answer is "probably not!" Fear not, I've found a solution! For the sole purpose of writing this article, I sampled three light alternatives to ice cream. You can Google any of these products and locate a store closest to you that carries them.

1. Arctic Zero- Chocolate Peanut Butter

Each pint of this dessert contains less than 150 calories (not a typo). There is also no artificial sugar added. Flavors include Vanilla with a hint of Maple,

Pumpkin Spice, Coffee, Cookies and Cream, Strawberry, and Mint Chocolate Cookie. Be advised, this treat has a 'different' consistency than regular ice cream, it's a bit harder and not particularly creamy but it does a great job satisfying your sweet tooth.

2. Häagen-Dazs- Chocolate Sorbet

With 130 calories per half cup and ½ gram of fat, this sorbet tastes closer to the real deal of chocolate ice cream than any of the other samples I tried. I let this one thaw out a bit before digging in to see if I would get a softer texture--that really seemed to do the trick. I added some chocolate syrup and a few shaved almonds to make a low-calorie sundae!

3. Ciao Bella Blood Orange Sorbet

It's hard to believe this sorbet of exotic blood oranges has just 60 calories per serving. From their website to the in-store selection I viewed, it seems as though this product comes in at least 30 different flavors. This particular flavor packed a punch with every bite; you could taste the "real" orange flavor. Many ice cream "substitutes" leave out the flavor but in Ciao Bella's case, there was no error!

Don't just take my word for it, go out and try one or all three, and you may be pleasantly surprised.

Vocational Evaluation & Expert Witness Testimony in Divorce Litigation

Camilla Mason, MS
Vocational Case Manager



Vocational outlook is a key component to many divorce settlement processes. Divorce courts are increasingly requiring substantive data to support requests for permanent term or rehabilitative alimony. We are now seeing that many divorce attorneys are proactively referring their clients to us for a thorough vocational outlook assessment so that the results of the assessment may be considered during the divorce settlement. FRR's vocational experts who specialize in divorce litigation have successfully assisted attorneys and clients in reaching equitable settlements through performing such assessments.

The assessment is used to determine current earning capacity or vocational potential of one or both spouses. An employability or spousal rehabilitation assessment determines the highest level of occupational functioning, ability to make financial contribution, and need for training and education. An assessment may be requested for either partner to identify careers compatible with the individual's training and experience.

As in the injured worker population, a complete assessment includes a review of personal data and employment/educational history through the present. It includes a vocational interest and aptitude test, as appropriate, and interpretation. Medical or psychological information is evaluated as needed. A discussion of career options, job market information, and recommended actions are then presented. A written report may be provided to the referring attorney. Consultations and expert witness testimony are provided, as needed. The format may be adapted to the individual case and ranges from a single session vocational interview to a multi-session complete assessment and expert testimony at trial.

As our Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have an average of 12 years of experience rehabilitating injured workers, we are excited to perform work in divorce litigation as it provides new professional challenges through unique situations. A recent case was particularly intriguing to us as we assessed the vocational outlook of an individual who held a graduate degree, but had not been employed for many years - and was responsible for foster children! We served as a vital tool in two days of trial testimony, breaking down the plaintiff's ability to maintain continued financial commitments to herself and foster children. Suffice to say, this was anything but standard but produced successful results for the requested party.

We look forward to offering the same exceptional quality service in this new arena, as we continue to serve those in our current Workers' Compensation Community.

Physician Workers' Compensation Liaison Program

Lori Schellenberg, RN, CCM
Senior Nurse Case Manager

FRR is pleased to announce a service which guides medical practices through developing a program that better serves the needs of patients, insurance carriers, employers and attorneys in Workers' Compensation (WC) cases. The program is conducted by a Nurse Case Manager who holds on-site meetings, assesses current protocols and provides



recommendations/training to ensure the program addresses the uniqueness of WC claims and claim handling.

CASE STUDY

Dr. Ralph Salvagno, Orthopedic Surgeon in Hagerstown, MD, envisioned a WC-friendly practice - one that provided the ideal environment for patients to work with their Case Manager - as he planned an entirely new practice, Parkway Institute. Parkway Institute, which will include IME services, orthopedic, neurosurgery, rehabilitative medicine, neurology, chiropractic and physical therapy services, and an orthopedic urgent care facility, is currently being formed through a merger with a Neurosurgical group and will be located on I-81 in Hagerstown, MD.

FRR Senior Case Manager, Lori Schellenberg, was enlisted to help develop the WC-friendly practice -from office design to business practices. With Lori's guidance, the practice incorporated a WC hotline for patients and other parties, a conference area for case manager/patient interviews and discussions, and work space and equipment for case manager use. She worked with the group in evaluating and selecting office management software and prescription programs, provided Return-To-Work reference guidelines, and partnered with staff in developing procedures to optimize the experience of all parties to WC claims. FRR is confident that Parkway Institute will be a favorite for area employers, as well as case managers and insurers.

For further details please contact your Account Manager.

Stuffed Avocados

EatingWell.Com



Forget the bread; next time you're serving chicken or tuna salad for lunch, try mounding it in an avocado half instead.

This recipe makes 4 servings and takes 10 Minutes to make!

Ingredients:

- 2 Medium avocados, halved and pits removed
- 1 cup prepared chicken, tuna or seafood salad

Preparation

Simply top each avocado half with a 1/4 c. of the salad!

Enjoy!

Not sure what to make for dinner tonight?! Check out www.Supercook.com - a new recipe search engine that searches based on ingredients you want to use, as well as those to exclude!



First Rehabilitation Resources, Inc. 14502 Greenview Dr | Suite 360 | Laurel, MD 20708
Phone: 301.369.3401/410.792.0506/888.252.0368 Fax: 301.362.9350 Web: www.1stRehab.com

[Forward email](#)

[SafeUnsubscribe](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to slang@1strehab.com by slang@1strehab.com | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe](#)™ | [Privacy Policy](#).

First Rehabilitation Resources, Inc. | 14502 Greenview Drive | Suite 360 | Laurel | MD | 20708