

# Establishing a Relationship with a Medical Provider



By Chuck Koch, Loss Control Consultant

Having a Designated Medical Provider will improve a company's safety and claims processes. Directing an employee to a provider after an injury and utilizing them for your specific occupational health needs puts you in control. Most companies evaluate other types of vendors and communicate their expectations to those they choose to partner with. This is also an effective approach in selecting a Medical Provider. Providers are eager to learn your needs so they can provide quality service thus retain your business. When electing to enter into a relationship, simple preplanning will prove beneficial. The following five-step process will be of value.

## ***Step 1-Determine clinics in your area.***

Providers who practice occupational medicine are more knowledgeable of company needs. They have the services and structures in place to meet your objectives. There are several ways to locate a clinic. By looking under occupational medicine in the yellow pages. By talking to other local employers. Also, Western National has had extensive experience in dealing with providers and can help you. In rural areas there are less choices however, the following steps will improve your success.

## ***Step 2-Determine your needs.***

Gather members of your management team and list specific services you require. Examples include: Injury care, Post Offer Physicals, Drug Screening, Audiograms, Respirator Surveillance exams, etc. Below each service list your expectations. Your needs and expectations regarding injury care may include:

- What specialties will treat employees?
- What is the timeliness of appointments and how do we make them?
- How will the clinic communicate with you after the appointment? A workability report within 24 hours?

These will become your interview questions. Providers will be impressed you are prepared.

## ***Step 3-Conduct your interviews.***

If several clinics in your area, you may want to conduct a prescreen phone interview. Contact the Clinic Administrator or Occupational Health Coordinator. Reduce the list to your top choices. Schedule a face-to-face meeting. Interview the staff and tour the facility. You will now be armed with the knowledge to select a provider who best meets your needs.

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***Step 4-Educate the provider on what you do.***

If you do not tell them about yourself, they are forced to rely on information received from others. Invite them to tour your facility. If you have job descriptions outlining the physical requirements provide a copy. If work is available for injured employees with restrictions communicate this. The more your medical provider knows about you the better.

***Step 5-Follow-up.***

Let the clinic know what you think of their service. Should you have medical questions ask them for input. Most relationships present challenges. Working through these will strengthen your partnership.

Companies instituting these practices experience improved quality of care and improved communications at reduced costs. You will feel the difference. If you would like help establishing a clinic contact one of Western National Loss Control Professionals.