

# INJURED WORKERS: RETURNING TO WORK AND OPIOID DEPENDENCY

**Occupational Health Internship Program  
Summer 2013**

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**Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Employment Relations Division**

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# Background



# Background

- Safety culture: training & equipment
- Accommodating injured worker
- Termination
- New job

- Rate of Injury

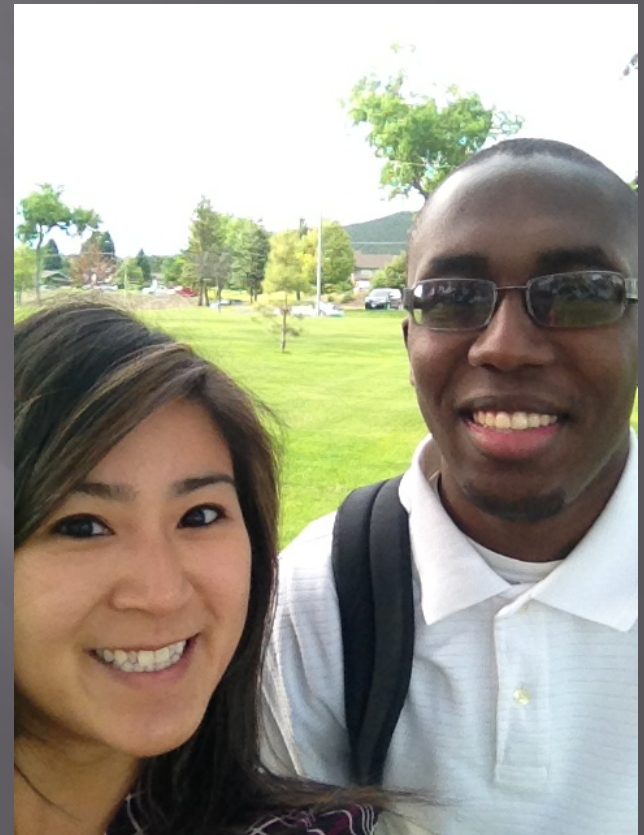


- Complex
- Compensation
- Attorney

- Medical Costs
- Treatment
- Opioid Dependency
- Psychological Issues

# Objectives

- ▣ Inform injured workers on the dangers of opioid dependency
- ▣ Gain first-hand experience with workers' compensation
- ▣ Survey injured workers about returning to work



FIRST DAY AT WORK!

# Methods

- ▣ Created brochure on opioid dependency
- ▣ Physical therapy clinics and trainings
- ▣ Made 830 calls and completed 190 surveys



# Give-Back Product

## Symptoms of Withdrawal

### Physical Symptoms:

Tremors, abdominal pain, chills, perspiration, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, flu-like symptoms, restless legs and rapid heartbeat.

### Mental Symptoms:

Cravings for opioids, malaise, anxiety/panic attacks, paranoid thinking, dizziness, difficulty sleeping, and depression.

### Serious Symptoms:

Cardiac arrhythmias, strokes, seizures, dehydration and suicide attempts.

## Am I Dependent?

- Do you feel a strong need to take your opioid medication?
- Do you have difficulty controlling your use of opioid medication?
- Do you experience tremors, anxiety or other withdrawal symptoms when reducing your medication?
- Do you have to take more medication to ease the pain?
- Do you neglect food, hygiene or health care?
- Do you want to continue using your medication despite clear evidence of problems it is causing you?

Score: \_\_\_\_ / 6

\* If you answered "yes" to three or more of these statements, you may have opioid dependence and be at risk for addiction.

## Why It Matters?

**More Montanans die from prescription drug overdose than traffic crashes**

-MT DOJ, Forensic Science Division, 2011

### Opioid dependency puts you at risk for:

- Death
- Mental Confusion
- Nausea
- Difficulty Breathing
- Constipation
- Drowsiness
- Sedation
- Itching
- Fatigue

## Remember...

- Never take an opioid pain reliever unless it is prescribed for you
- Always take opioids as directed
- Do not use opioids with alcohol or other drugs or medicines
- Protect and lock up your opioids in a safe place, and properly dispose of leftover medicine
- Never share opioids with another person
- Be prepared for opioid emergencies
- Contact your doctor with any questions

## Be on the Alert for...

### Opioid Overmedication or Overdose

- Intoxicated behavior – confusion, slurred speech, stumbling
- Feeling dizzy, faint or drowsy
- Shortness of breath, slow or light breathing, or stopped breathing
- Unusual snoring, gasping, or snorting during sleep
- Difficulty waking up from sleep and becoming alert or staying awake
- Slow, unusual or stopped heartbeat



### CAUTION:

A person who at first only seems to be overmedicated may get much worse. They should be kept awake and watched closely. Call 911.

# Give-Back Product

## Resources

“Every 19 minutes someone dies of prescription drug overdose in America”

-CNN “Deadly Dose” Documentary

“More Americans die of prescription drug overdose than on the highways each year”

-US Centers of Disease Control

### Opioid Dependency - Is Not Addiction

Opioids may naturally cause physical dependency (tolerance & withdrawal)

### Tolerance

Higher and higher doses of opioids are required over time in order to achieve the same effect.

### Withdrawal

Negative physical and mental side effects occur after extended use of a drug is reduced abruptly or stopped.

5,000 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$0.08 per copy, for a total cost of \$386.00, which includes \$386.00 for printing and \$0.00 for distribution.



### If You See Signs or Symptoms of Overdose Call 911 and/or Contact:

**Rocky Mountain Poison Center**

1 (800) 222-1222

[www.rmpdc.org](http://www.rmpdc.org)



### If You See Signs or Symptoms of Dependency or Addiction Contact:

The doctor who prescribes your opioid medication

**Department of Health & Human Services**

**Chemical Dependency Bureau**

(406) 444-3964

[www.dphhs.mt.gov](http://www.dphhs.mt.gov)

or directly to

[www.dphhs.mt.gov/amdd/chemical-dependencyservices/index.shtml](http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/amdd/chemical-dependencyservices/index.shtml)

### Assistance with Return to Work:

**Stay at Work/Return to Work Program**

(406) 444-1752

Email: [sawrtwrquest@mt.gov](mailto:sawrtwrquest@mt.gov)

**Montana Department of Labor and Industry**

(406) 444-6543

Email: [dliquestions@mt.gov](mailto:dliquestions@mt.gov)

P.O. Box 1728

Helena, MT 59624-1728



## Your Health Matters

### Learn About Opioid Dependency



Montana Department of  
**LABOR & INDUSTRY**  
Employment Relations Division

# Site Visits

- ▣ [Kalispell]  
Montana State Fund training
  - Fee Schedule
  - Utility & Treatment Guideline training



- ▣ [Bozeman]  
Bozeman Deaconess Hospital training
  - SAW/RTW program
  - Utility & Treatment Guideline training



- ▣ [Helena]  
Labor-Management Advisory Council conference





# Site Visits

- ▣ Dr. Gary Lusin, PT, MS, LAT, CSCS, Owner
- ▣ Functional Capacity Evaluations
- ▣ Spoke with injured workers



Advanced Performance &  
Rehabilitation Services



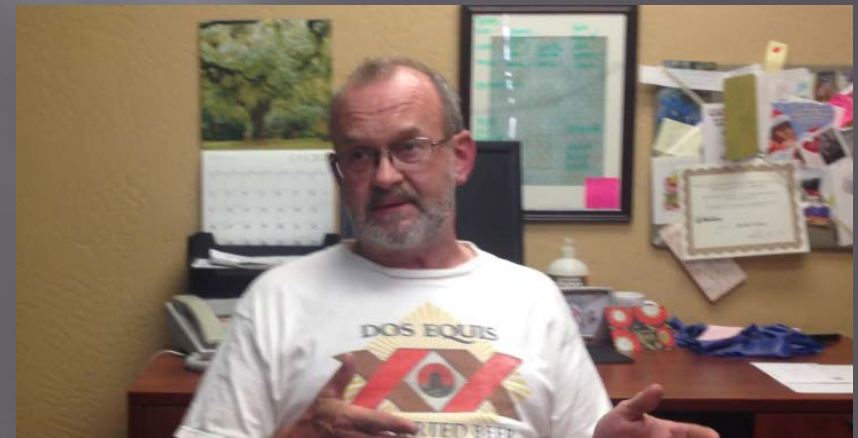
View from FCE window

# Site Visits



Sapphire Physical Therapy

- ▣ John Fiore, PT
- ▣ Lindsey Flint, DPT, CSCS, Certified Pilates Instructor
- ▣ Conducted preliminary interviews for the SAW/RTW survey
- ▣ Provided SAW/RTW postcards



Injured Worker Interview

# Site Visits

- Tiffany Ott
- Safety & Health Bureau workplace inspection
- Grain mill and log home construction company



Electrical Room  
Inspection



Giorvanni in Personal  
Protective Equipment

# Survey



Montana Department of  
**LABOR & INDUSTRY**  
Employment Relations Division  
P.O. Box 8011 Helena, MT 59604

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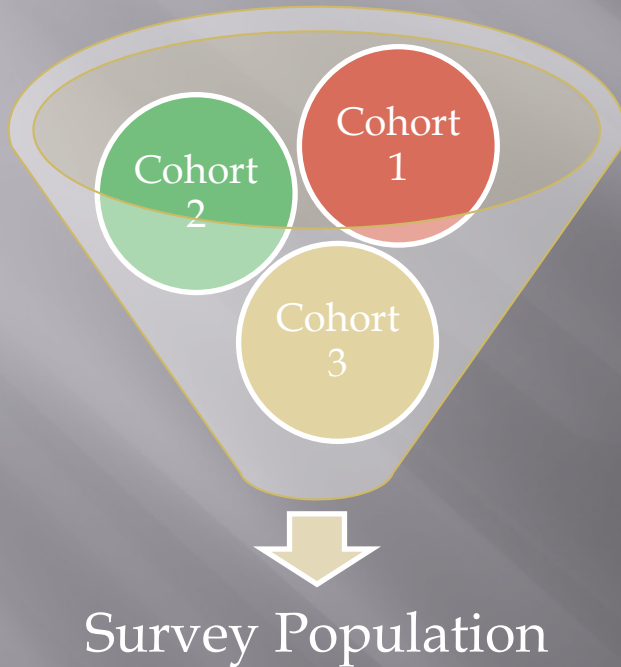
«Next Record»«AddressBlock»«FNAME\_» «LNAME\_»  
«ADDR\_»  
«CITY\_» «STATE\_» «ZIP\_»

«NBR\_»

The Montana Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) and workers' compensation insurers help Montana workers stay at work or return to work quickly after a work-related injury. Staying at work or returning to work reduces the impact of workplace injuries on workers, their families, their employers and their communities. To find out more, contact your workers' compensation insurer or DLI by visiting <http://erd.dli.mt.gov>, by phone 406-444-1752 or by email at [sawrtwrquest@mt.gov](mailto:sawrtwrquest@mt.gov).



# Survey- Study Population



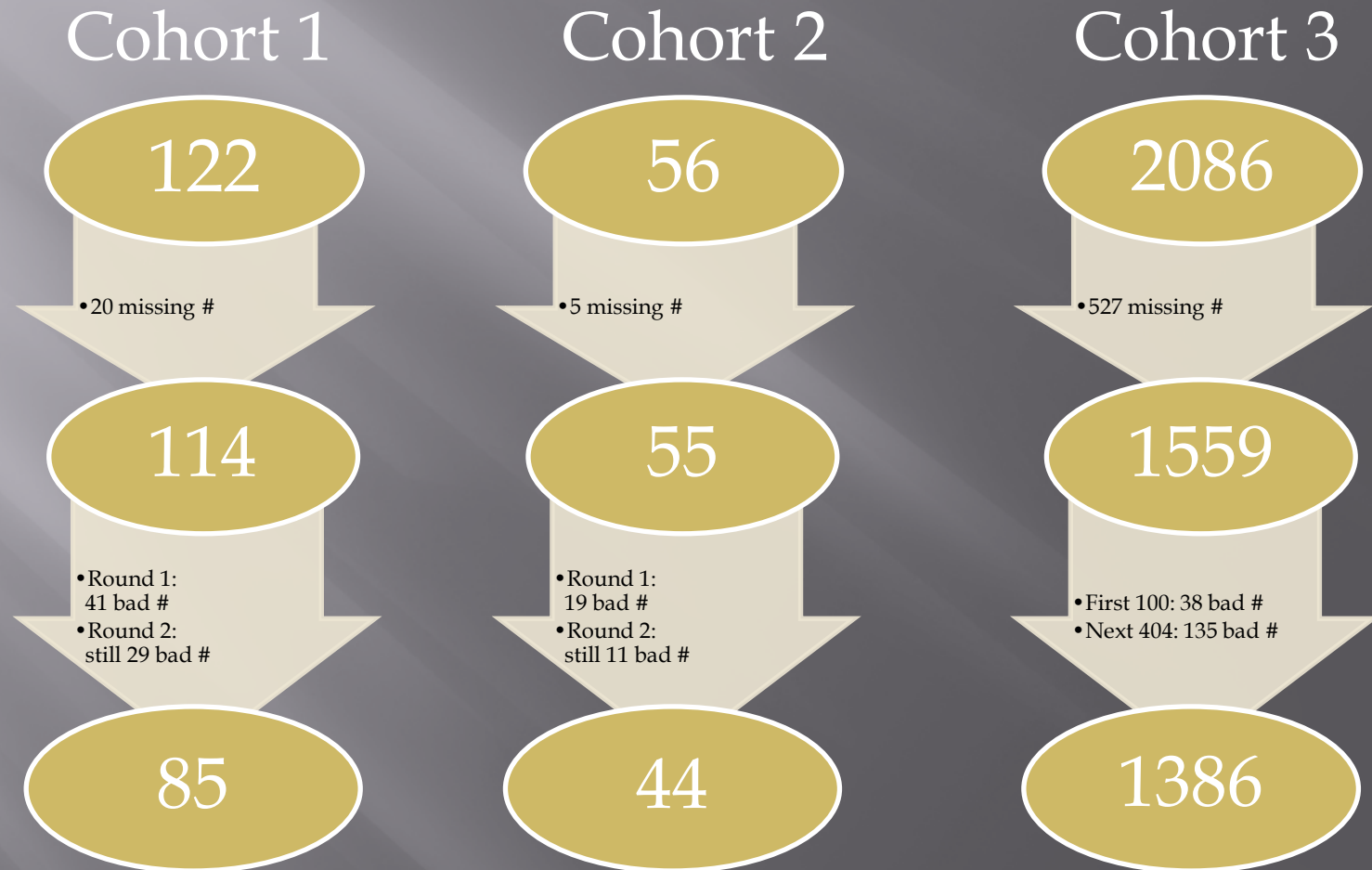
**Cohort 1:** utilized the Stay At Work/Return To Work (SAW/RTW) program through their workers' compensation insurer and received assistance

**Cohort 2:** contacted the Department of Labor and Industry's SAW/RTW program and did not receive assistance

**Cohort 3:** received indemnity and did not contact the SAW/RTW program

\*Restricted to subjects for whom a First Report of Injury form was filed between 7/1/2012 - 7/1/2013

# Study Population





# Study Population

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Total
Total Calls	188	87	555	830
People Spoken to	74	34	175	283
Total Responses	59	27	111	197
Surveys Completed	58	26	106	190
Attorney Fee Agreements	5	2	1	8
Surveys Refused	1	1	5	7



# Survey- Results

- ▣ Have you returned to work since your injury?

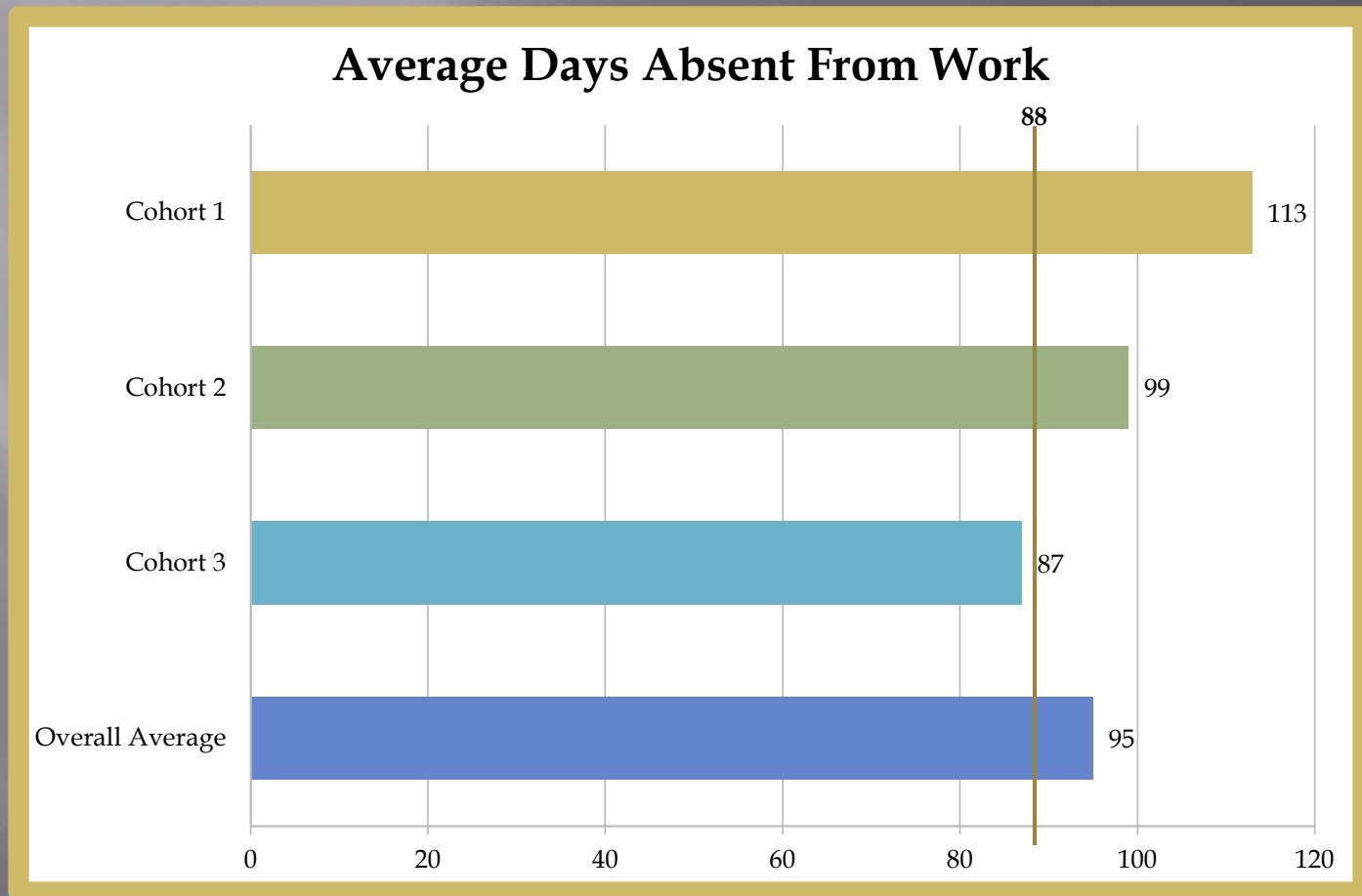
	% Yes	Yes Ratio
Cohort 1	48.3%	28/58
Cohort 2	61.5%	16/27
Cohort 3	68.9%	73/106

- ▣ Was it with the same employer?

	% Yes	Yes Ratio
Cohort 1	82.1%	23/28
Cohort 2	93.8%	15/16
Cohort 3	86.3%	63/73

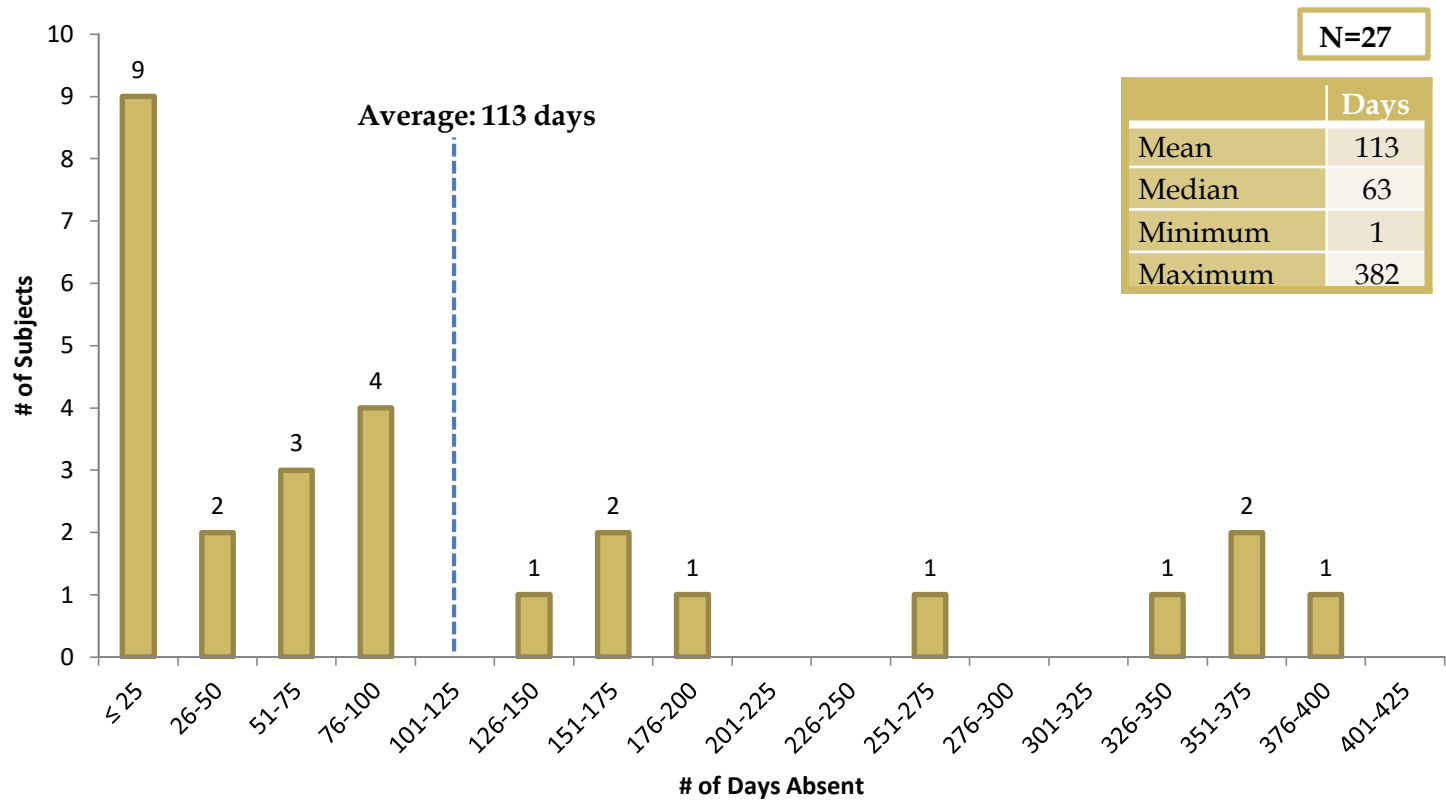
# Survey- Results

- Have you returned to work since your injury?



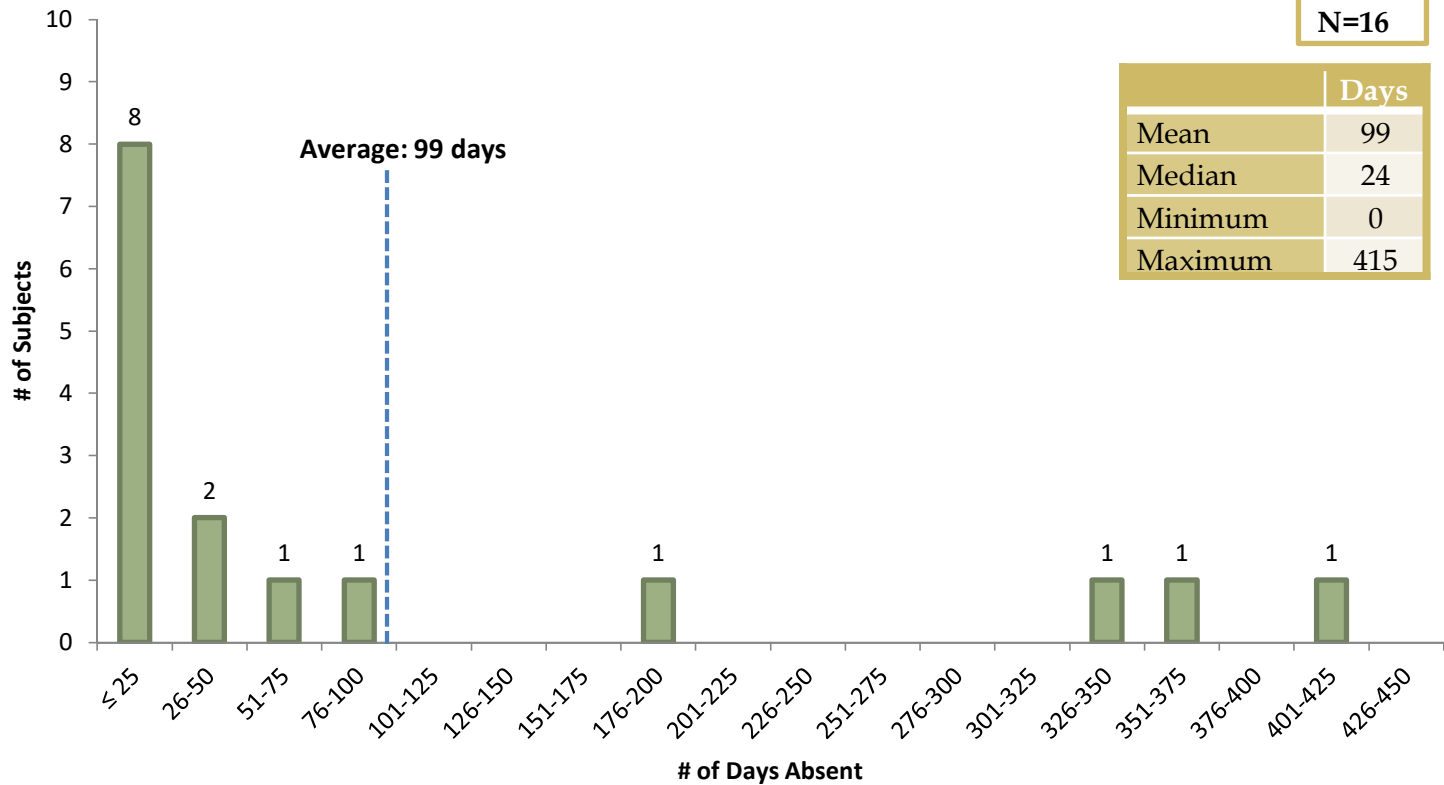
# Survey- Results

## Cohort I: Days Absent from Work



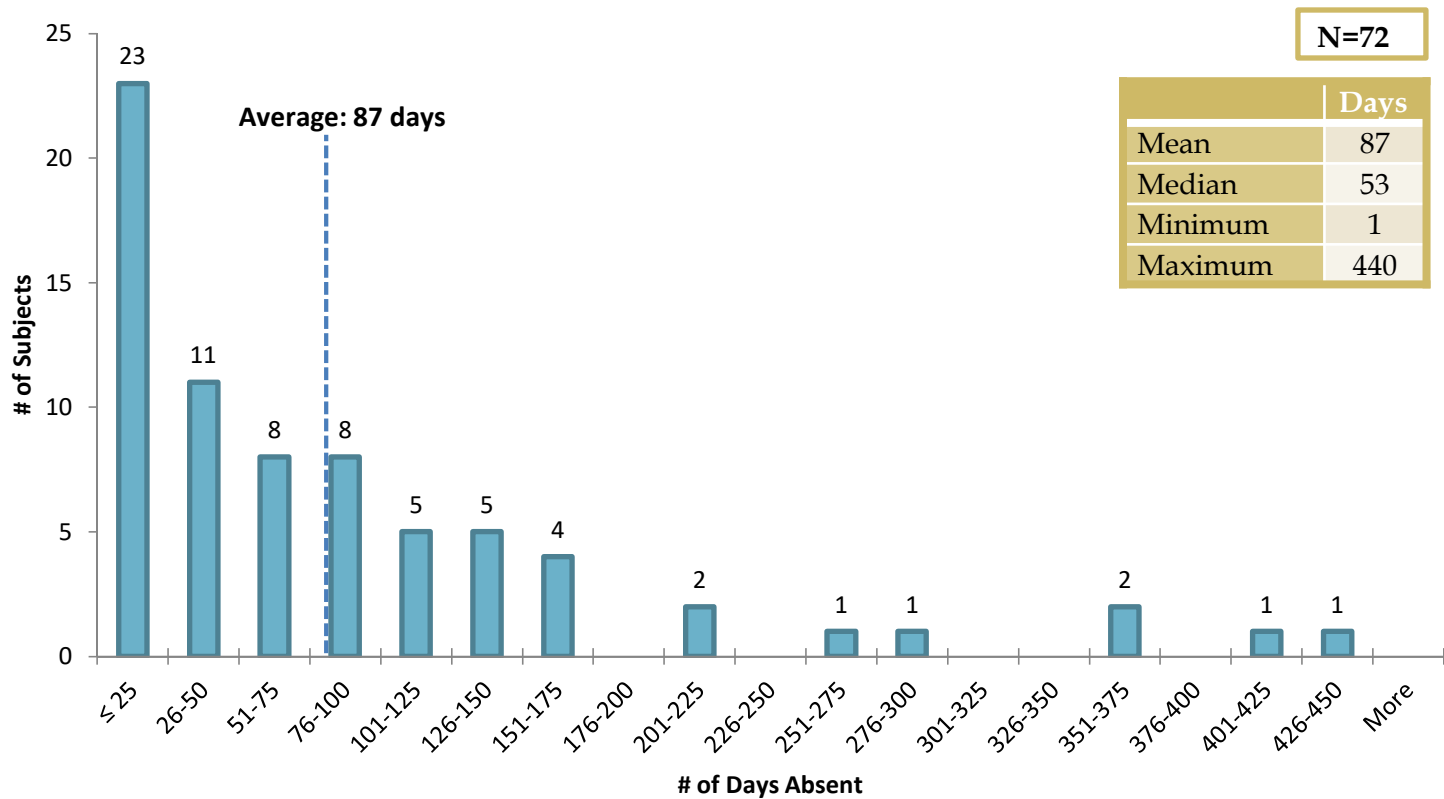
# Survey- Results

## Cohort II: Days Absent from Work



# Survey- Results

## Cohort III: Days Absent from Work



# Survey- Results

- [All cohorts, if not back to work] Why aren't you working?

## Cohort 1

Response Category	%	Ratio
<b>Not released by doctor</b>	73.3 %	22/30
<b>Released; no light duty avail.</b>	20.0 %	6/30
<b>Seasonal worker</b>	3.3 %	1/30
<b>Waiting for next step</b>	3.3 %	1/30

## Cohort 2

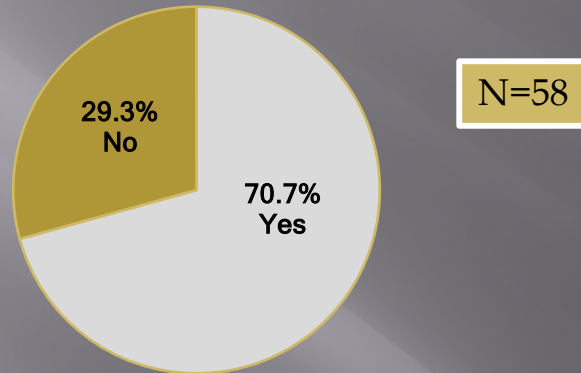
Response Category	%	Ratio
<b>Not released by doctor</b>	50.0 %	5/10
<b>Terminated; looking for work</b>	30.0 %	3/10
<b>Terminated; in vocational rehab</b>	10.0 %	1/10
<b>Quit</b>	10.0 %	1/10

## Cohort 3

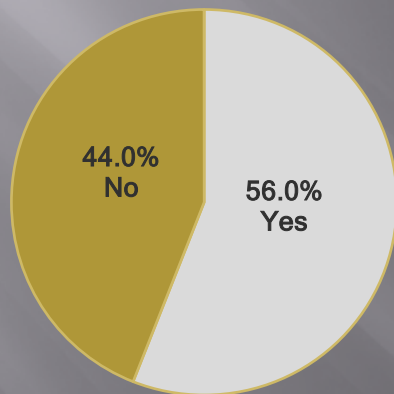
Response Category	%	Ratio
<b>Not released by doctor</b>	60.6 %	20/33
<b>Terminated; looking for work</b>	9.1 %	3/33
<b>Released; no light duty available</b>	9.1 %	3/33
<b>Waiting for next step</b>	9.1 %	3/33
<b>Starting work soon</b>	6.1 %	2/33
<b>Quit</b>	3.0 %	1/33
<b>Retired</b>	3.0 %	1/33

# Survey- Results

- [Cohort 1] Do you feel like the assistance you received helped you return to work?



- [Cohort 2] Did the information we provided influence your return to work?



N=25

Helped A Little	Helped Some	Helped A Lot	Rating Average	Response Count
3	2	9	2.43	14

- [Cohort 3] \*was not asked because they did not seek or receive assistance

# Survey- Results

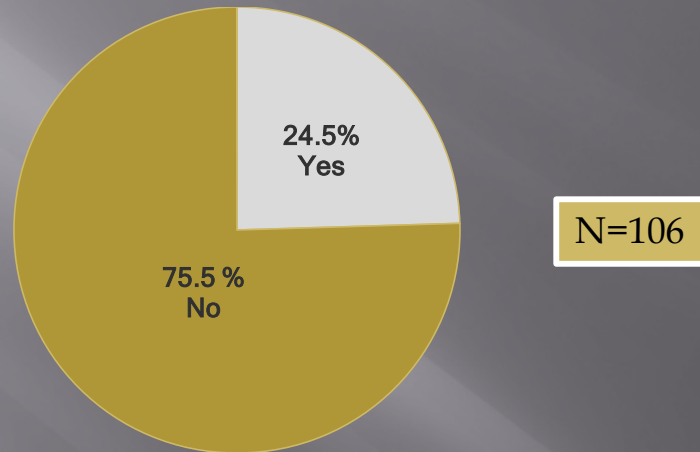
- ▣ [Cohort 2] Do you recall why you did not receive assistance through the DOLI's RTW program?

<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Response %</b>	<b>Response Ratio</b>
<b>Inquiry Only</b>	19.2%	5/26
<b>Denied Claim</b>	15.4%	4/26
<b>Already back to work</b>	15.4%	4/26
<b>Not Medically Released</b>	15.4%	4/26
<b>No</b>	15.4%	4/26
<b>Terminated from work</b>	11.5%	3/26
<b>Received assistance through other party</b>	7.7%	2/26



# Survey- Results

- [Cohort 3] Do you recall receiving the SAW/RTW postcard?

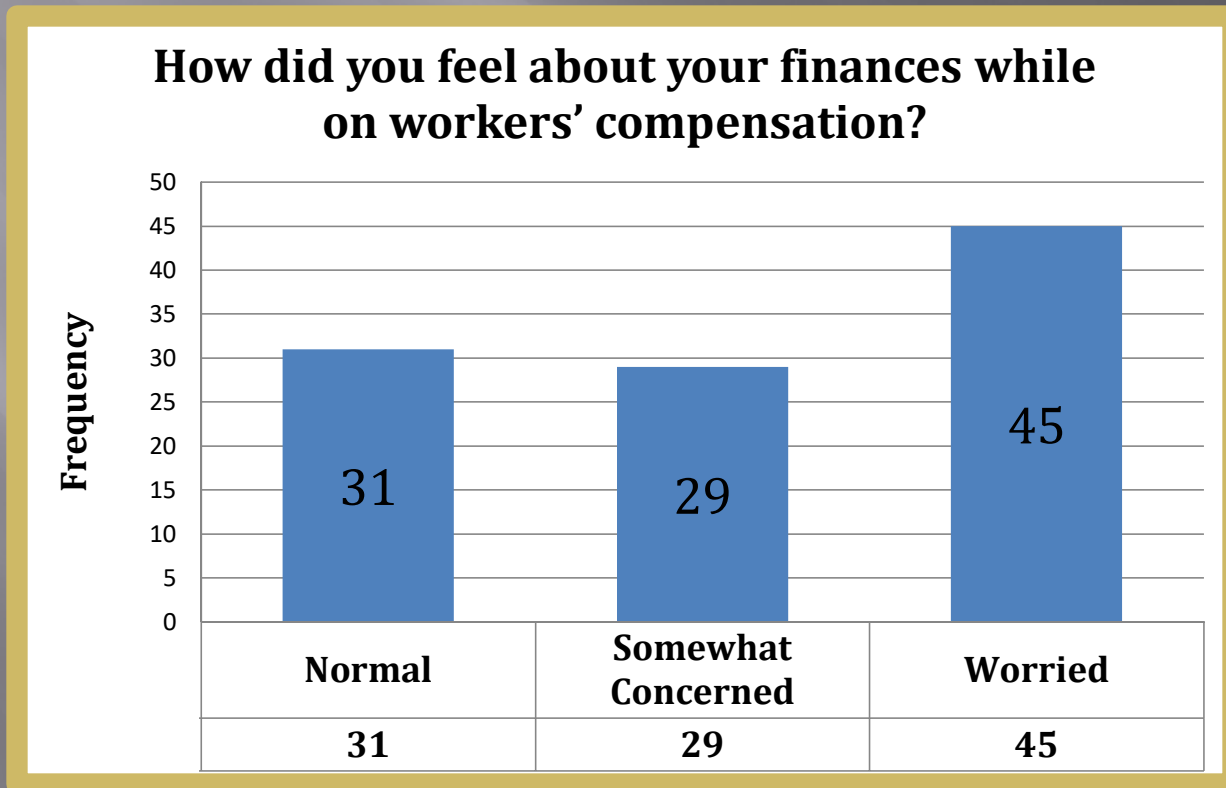


- [Cohort 3, if yes to above]  
Did you feel like there was a reason not to call?

Response Category	Response %	Response Ratio
<b>Did not need assistance</b>	42.3%	11/26
<b>No</b>	30.8%	8/26
<b>Busy</b>	7.7%	2/26
<b>Did not understand postcard</b>	7.7%	2/26
<b>Confused and overwhelmed about W.C.</b>	7.7%	2/26
<b>Not Medically Released</b>	3.9%	1/26

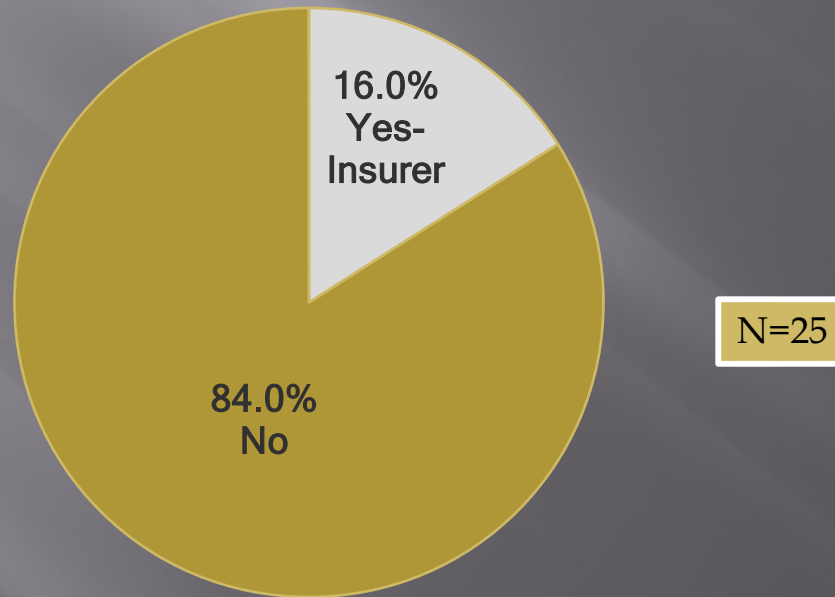
# Survey- Results

- [Cohort 3] How did you feel about your finances while on workers' compensation, on a scale of 1-3 (1 being normal, 2 being somewhat concerned, and 3 being worried)?



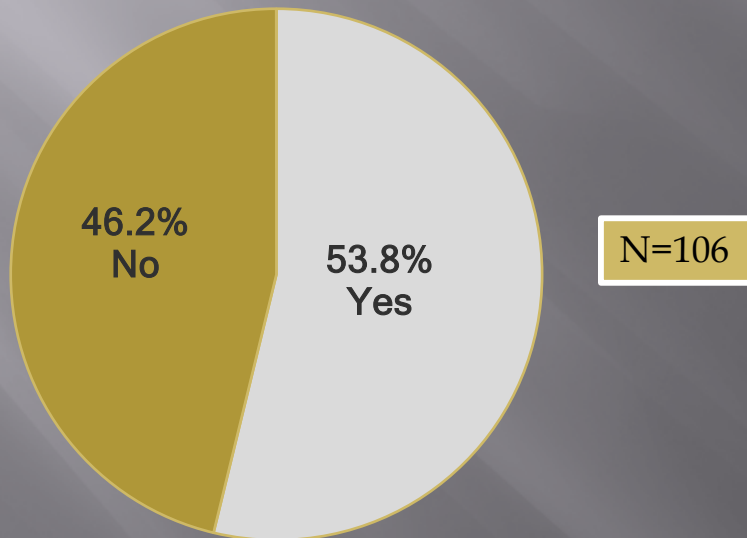
# Survey- Results

- [Cohort 2] Have you used any other Return to Work services?

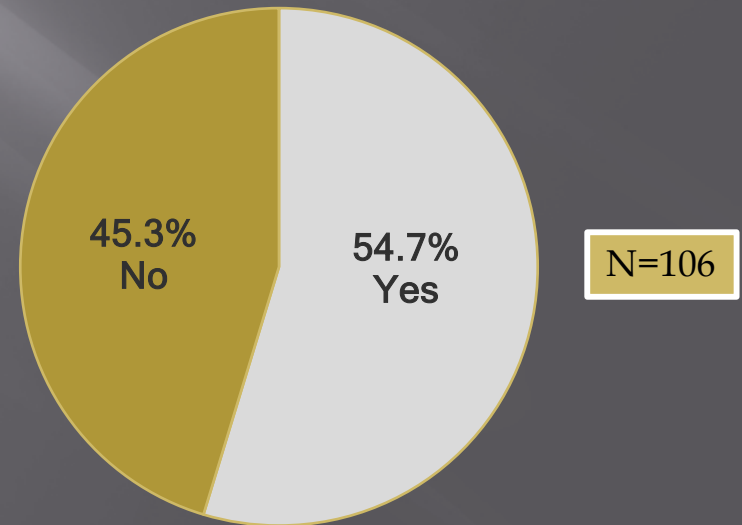


# Survey- Results

- [Cohort 3] Has a workers' compensation insurer contacted you about returning to work?



- [Cohort 3] Did your employer contact you about returning to work?





# Survey- Results

[All Cohorts]

- What could the Montana Department of Labor & Industry do to improve the Return to Work program?

## Top 3 responses

Improve communication with insurer (n=32)

Provide more workers' comp information (n=21)

Shorten timeline for medical treatment and RTW (n=16)

## All response categories

Difficulties with Insurer	Shorten timeline	Better communication b/w all parties	Help getting job
More information available	Issues with Employer	More contact from DOLI	Get rid of workers' compensation
More options for med. providers	More compensation for WC	Improve Postcard	Process is too complicated

# Survey- Attorney Influence

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3
<b># Subjects with Attorney Fee Agreements</b>	5	2	1
<b>Bad Numbers</b>	3	1	1
<b>Completed Surveys</b>	1	1	0
<b>Refusals Influenced by Attorneys</b>	1	0	2*
<b>Attorney Names</b>	Richard Martin	-	Richard Martin Paul Crasman



# Survey- Recommendations

- ▣ Expand & improve SAW/RTW outreach
- ▣ Provide information about workers' compensation to injured workers
- ▣ Improve communication between all parties
- ▣ Synchronize terminology about RTW
- ▣ Require accurate employee contact information
- ▣ Refine future survey

# Reflections

- ▣ Challenges & Successes
  - Limited resources
  - Expanding project scope
  - Brochure
  - Survey calls
  - Site visits







# Montana OHIP Site Reflections

- ▣ Site visits
- ▣ Objectives
- ▣ Schedule
- ▣ Background Information
- ▣ Apartment
- ▣ Transportation
- ▣ Other Services



**Occupational Health  
Internship Program**



*Home*

# Questions



# Acknowledgements

Thank you...

Montana State Department of Labor & Industry  
Advanced Performance and Rehabilitation Services

Sapphire Physical Therapy

OHIP Staff

National Institutes for Occupational Safety & Health  
Association of Occupational & Environmental Clinics

