Telehealth for Injury Prevention
Thank you
THANK YOU TO LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERS OF THE ASSP
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Agenda

- Purpose of Telehealth
- Injury prevention best practices
- Benefits and costs

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Purpose of Telehealth

COVID FACTORS
DEFINITIONS
SCOPE OF PRACTICE
MN Slowly Returning to Business as Usual

Employers have guidance from MDH, CDC, OSHA re: returning to work practices for social distancing, sanitizing, etc.

Employees returning from furlough, working from home, or reduced hours

Essential workers are perhaps doing new tasks, working longer/adjusted hours, new products and procedures to learn

Our new normal now includes “WFH,” “telework”, “telemedicine” and “telehealth”
Tele services booming

- Telehealth visits on pace to top 1 billion by end of 2020
- Existing technology mobilized in new ways
- Increased payment options

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Employer Return to Work Planning

Use technology to add to injury prevention program

Employee awareness, readiness for work, support

Employer awareness, monitoring, and injury prevention tools
Define: Telemedicine

- Allows for interaction between health care provider and patient
- Uses HIPAA compliant platform as medical information is being communicated
- Applicable to physician or therapy appointments
- Billed to health insurance or work comp for physician or therapy visit
- Increased coverage from health insurers during COVID 19, including Medicaid and Medicare
Define: Telehealth for Injury Prevention

- Before a health care claim or work comp case is filed
- As part of early reporting model
- Employee symptoms are recognized, interventions applied, ergonomics addressed, and symptoms are resolved
- Interventions are within OSHA first aid guidelines
- Communication with employer
Telehealth is wherever you are
Customize your Injury Prevention Program

VARIETY OF OPTIONS AVAILABLE, TELEHEALTH IS PIECE OF THE PUZZLE
Injury prevention models

- Customized to meet needs of employer (industry, # employees, injury history, goals)
- Onsite Therapy Model
  - Structured time at the workplace
  - Injury prevention visits as well as ergonomic screens, job analysis, employee training and education, etc
- On-Demand Therapy Model
  - Onsite visit with therapist & employee within 48 hours of request
- Telehealth Visits
  - Video conference with injured employee & therapist to address soreness
Scope of Practice for Injury Prevention Specialist

Musculoskeletal Complaints

- Soreness or discomfort

Interventions under OSHA First Aid Guidelines

- Hands-on work for sore muscles
- Heat, ice, taping
- Soft supports
- Stretches for general health
Home Office Example - Sami

- Complains of wrist soreness she believes is due to her job as an IT Specialist
- Safety Director requests "on-demand visit" with Injury Prevention Specialist
- On-demand visits transition to telehealth due to COVID 19
- Coached on stretches, icing & use of wrist soft support. Also instructed on workstation set-up & office ergonomics
- Total visits for resolution of issue: 4
Best practices for injury prevention

EARLY REPORTING MODEL
FOLLOW THROUGH
DATA AND ROI
Early reporting model

- Early employee report of musculoskeletal soreness or discomfort
- Employer-led process for addressing employee symptoms
- Telehealth session with a therapist as part of injury solution

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Waiting for the Injury

Employee feels sore

- Employee continues to work
- Supervisor, HR, and coworkers unaware
- Employee calls in sick due to soreness
- Soreness increases
- Decreased Productivity
- Employer is notified

Employee goes to Doctor and reports work injury

Work Comp Injury and OSHA Recordable
Catch it early...prevent injury

EARLY REPORTING

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Work Comp Injury and OSHA Recordable

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Employee feels sore

Employee reports soreness

Onsite therapist addresses soreness under OSHA First Aid

Therapist monitors work environment & makes recommendations if needed.

Employee receives care and is involved in resolution of symptoms

Therapist works with employer if further changes required.

Employee continues working

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What does session include?

- Employee report of event or incident that caused soreness
  - Work related and non-work related factors that may have led to soreness
- Review of symptoms
- Assessment – AROM, ease of movement, activity limitations due to symptoms
- Ergo screen – if possible, video tour
- Interventions – coaching on manual work, heat/ice, taping, stretches, etc...., to relieve symptoms
- Follow up plan, including home care
Session follow through

- Injury investigation – ergonomics, non-neutral postures, job analysis
- Symptom recognition – tracking and monitoring symptoms through visits
- Symptom resolution – no limit on number of visits
- Compassionate coaching and team approach – safety director, supervisors, HR, OHN
Identify & Measure Goals

Goals can include:

- Where are your injuries occurring – by department, by job title?
- What body parts are being injured?
- What are your goals – decrease recordables, decrease health care costs, decrease lost time...?

Data:

- How many visits until resolution?
- Able to work at full duty after injury prevention intervention?
- How do you measure success of the program?
Mary, Medical Device Assembler

- Worked 19 years for large medical device company
- Assembled small parts in clean room environment
- Reported non-dominant wrist soreness
- Supervisor scheduled telehealth visit
- Demonstrated her work process and noted aggravating postures
- Instructed in modified technique
- Employee seen for 4 visits with symptom resolution
- Employee demonstrated modified technique to coworkers and supervisors
Payoff

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?
Low back is the most frequently injured body part, followed by knee and shoulder.

Twin Cities saw the lowest % decrease in indemnity cases compared to other Minnesota regions.

Strain injuries are the most frequent lost time injury; average cost of $24,318 per case.

Manufacturing had the smallest decrease in premium reductions.
Reporting a Workplace Injury

Employee Injured at Work

Informs Employer

Employee Completes Report of Injury

Claim Submitted to Insurance for determination

Employee Visits Doctor:
1. First Aid or Skilled Services (recordable)
2. Plan of Care
3. Restrictions
4. Management of Care

Insurance manages claim until closed (MMI or PPD)

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Aug 15, 2014 - Reports have shown that the average cost of a back injury related workers comp claim can be $40,000 - $80,000 per employee. 2013 Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index
Cost of Injury Prevention Programs

Work Comp Back Injury
- Doctor appointments, therapy, prescriptions, imaging, surgery
- Avg $40,000 of direct costs
- Indirect costs add to overall cost
  - Lost time
  - Lost productivity
- Employer does not have control of outcome, timeline, or costs

Injury prevention
- 6-8 telehealth visits
- Less than 5% of work comp back injury cost
- Indirect costs significantly reduced
  - No lost time
  - Productivity continues
- Employer aware and involved in the care and progress of employee
COVID & the Unknown

- Unemployment hovering at 15% with most workers temporarily furloughed
- Workers will return deconditioned with new risk factors
- Work comp cases expected to rise: increased injuries as physical work demands exceed worker capacity
- Cost effective solutions to protect the employer and the employee will benefit both
- Like a layer of PPE for your company
What are the benefits of telemedicine?
- Telemedicine benefits both the employee and the employer.

Benefits include:
- Faster access to care for injured worker
- Less lost time from work
- Reduced lost instructional time
- Decreased dependence on substitutes to cover while employees attend medical appointments
- Less time and expense associated with traveling to doctor appointments and waiting for an exam
- Currently, work comp insurance is paying for telemedicine visits
Who benefits?

- One employer with employees in multiple locations
- Remote areas can access the same services as metro locations
- Small or underserved industries can access the same services as larger corporations
- Any employer looking to expand injury prevention program – or start one!
Added benefits

- Increased early reporting
- Decreased recordables
- Improved productivity - employee treated at work
- Increased employee satisfaction
- Improved communication between departments
- Preventative vs. reactive position
- Complies with social distancing guidelines
Telehealth engages worker in their own recovery

- Heat/ice
- Stretches
- Taping or soft supports
- Ergonomics for work task modifications
- Communication with team members or supervisors
- Health habits: Nutrition, cardio, stress reduction or sleep changes

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Bob, Material Handler

- Lead position at large company in shipping/receiving division
- Works full time unloading and loading trucks for deliveries
- Reported low back soreness
- Was scheduled with primary physician
- Supervisor encouraged telehealth visit
- Telehealth visit the following day, provided home cares and stretches over weekend
- Total of 6 telehealth visits with symptom resolution
Summary

Purpose: Telehealth can be an injury prevention video visit with a therapist to prevent work comp or health care costs.

Best Practices: Telehealth provides access for all employees in an organization, regardless of location, job type, or status.

Payoff: Injury prevention methods can decrease costs and can be customized to your business needs and goals.
Thank you!

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