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**Workplace Injuries**  
**A Team Approach**

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*Presented by: Atrium Health Employer Services*

# Today's Speakers



**Mary R. Hunt, MD, MPH, MRO**  
Occupational Medicine Assistant Specialty  
Medical Director, Employer Services



**Nicolette Davis, MPAS, PA-C**  
Occupational Medicine Southeast Region  
Director, Employer Services



**Grady Hardeman, M.Ed., ATC**  
Director, Employer Services,  
Southeast Region



**Susan Nowak, PT**  
Physical Therapist, Carolinas  
Rehabilitation – Union West



**Jan Frye Hill, BSN, RN, CCM**  
Workers' Comp Program  
Manager/Rehabilitation Program Coordinator,  
Department of Orthopedic Surgery

# Today's Topics

## Workplace Injuries A Team Approach

### ➤ Questions?

Enter your questions in the chat. Questions will be answered at the end, following all presenters.

➤ This meeting is being recorded and will be distributed.



### A Culture of Safety:

What is it and why is it important?



### Reducing Risks for Musculoskeletal Injuries



### Managing Medical Workers' Comp Claims

Best practices lead to best outcomes.



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# **A Culture of Safety**

**What is it and why is it important?**

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**Mary Ruth Hunt, MD, MPH, MRO**  
Occupational Medicine Assistant  
Specialty Medical Director, Employer Services

**Nicolette Davis, MPAS, PA-C**  
Occupational Medicine Southeast  
Region Director, Employer Services



# Meet Lucia

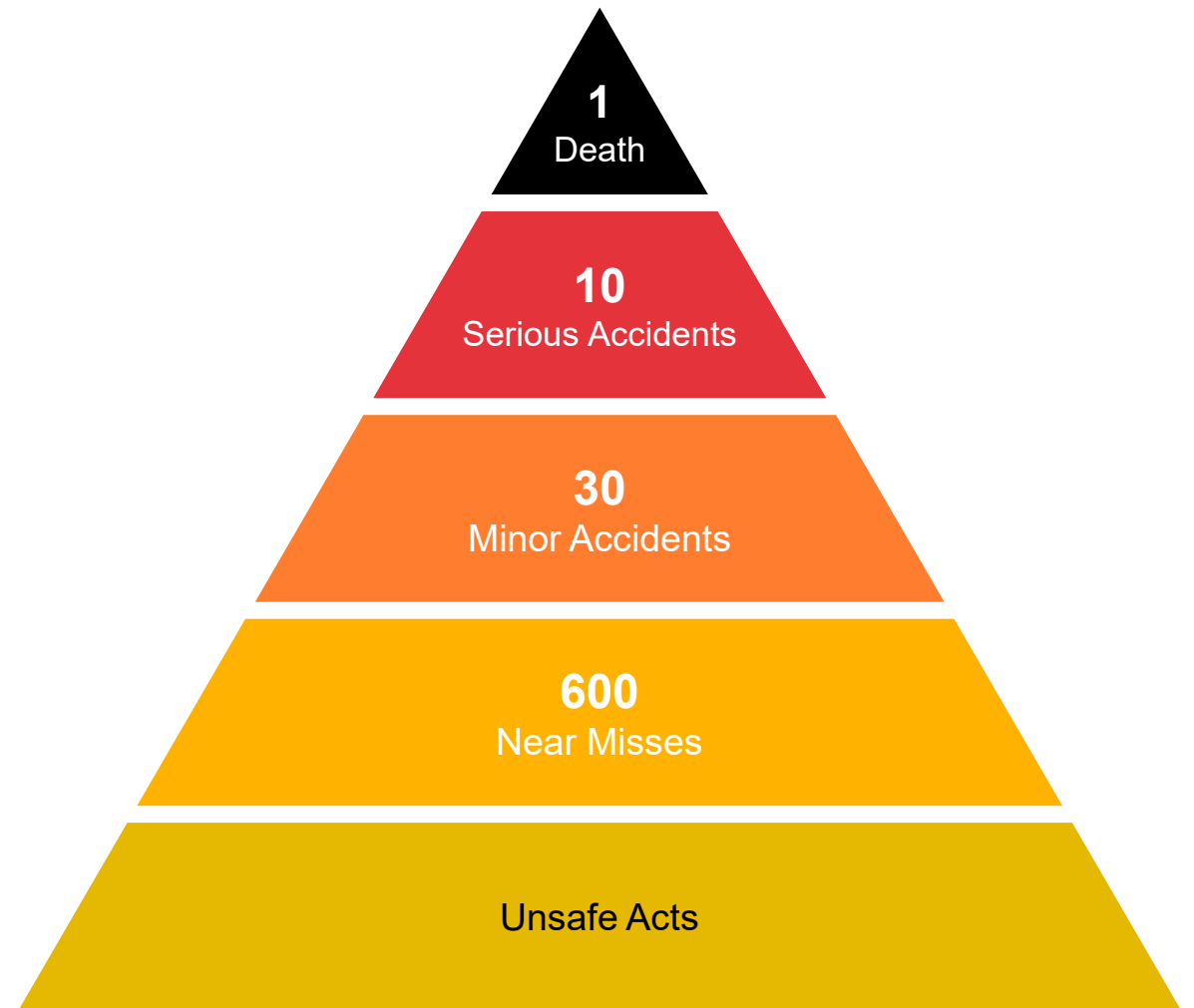
# Cultivating a Culture of Safety



**How many near misses makes an accident?**



**A near miss  
reported today,  
is the accident  
that does not  
happen tomorrow.**





# 5 Ways Employees Can Help Prevent Near Misses



Paying  
Attention to  
Detail



Communicating  
Clearly with  
Co-workers



Applying a  
Questioning  
Attitude



Knowing and  
Complying with  
Policies



Speaking Up

# What can employers do to prevent near misses?



Have the shift leader or their designee lead the safety huddle before the shift.

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During the safety huddle, use that 10-15 minutes of attention to combine active stretching while the leader briefs the team.

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Have an open-door policy between leadership and the employees they serve.

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Do not incentivize hiding near misses from leadership.



# An injury occurred, so now what?

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On-site health care

Utilize external health care that understands:

- Your business
- Workers' compensation nuances

Access to nurse case managers

Approve specialty referrals quickly

Debrief and regroup



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# **Reducing Risks for Musculoskeletal Injuries**

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**Susan Nowak, PT**

Carolinas Rehabilitation – Union West

# Outpatient Rehabilitation

## Occupational Medicine

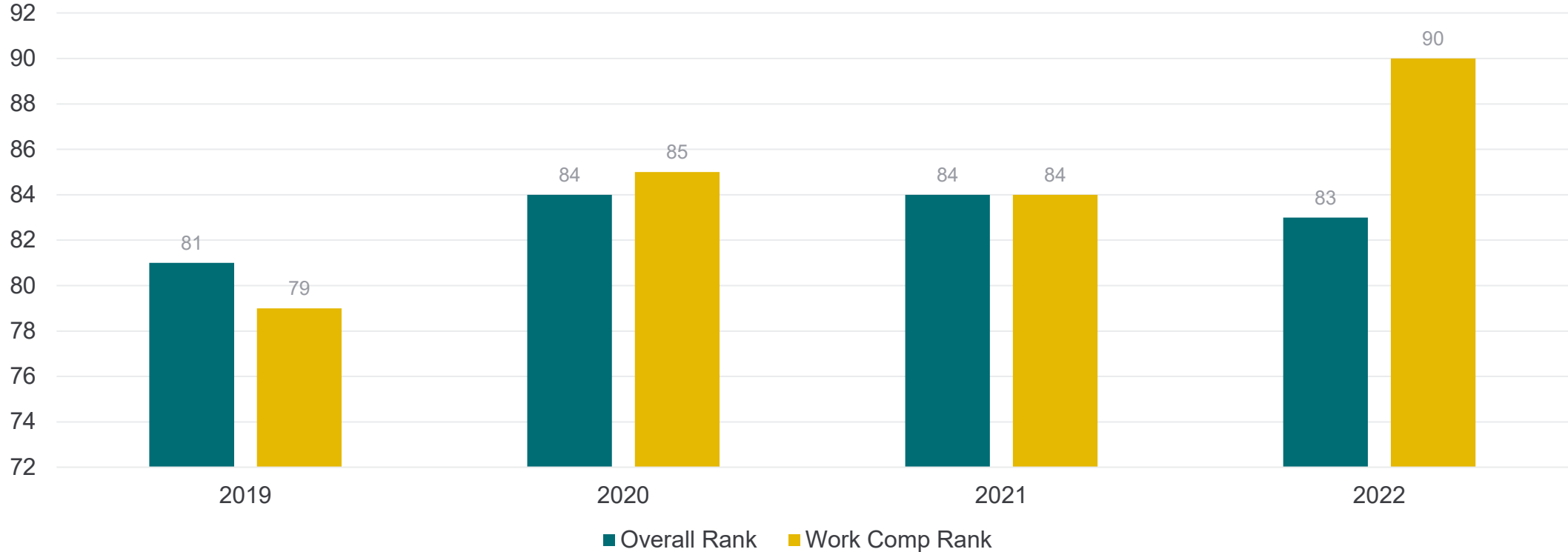
How can physical medicine and rehabilitation be used to help employers:

- Reduce the number of musculoskeletal (MSK) injuries that occur on the job
- Return employees to work faster when MSK injuries do occur



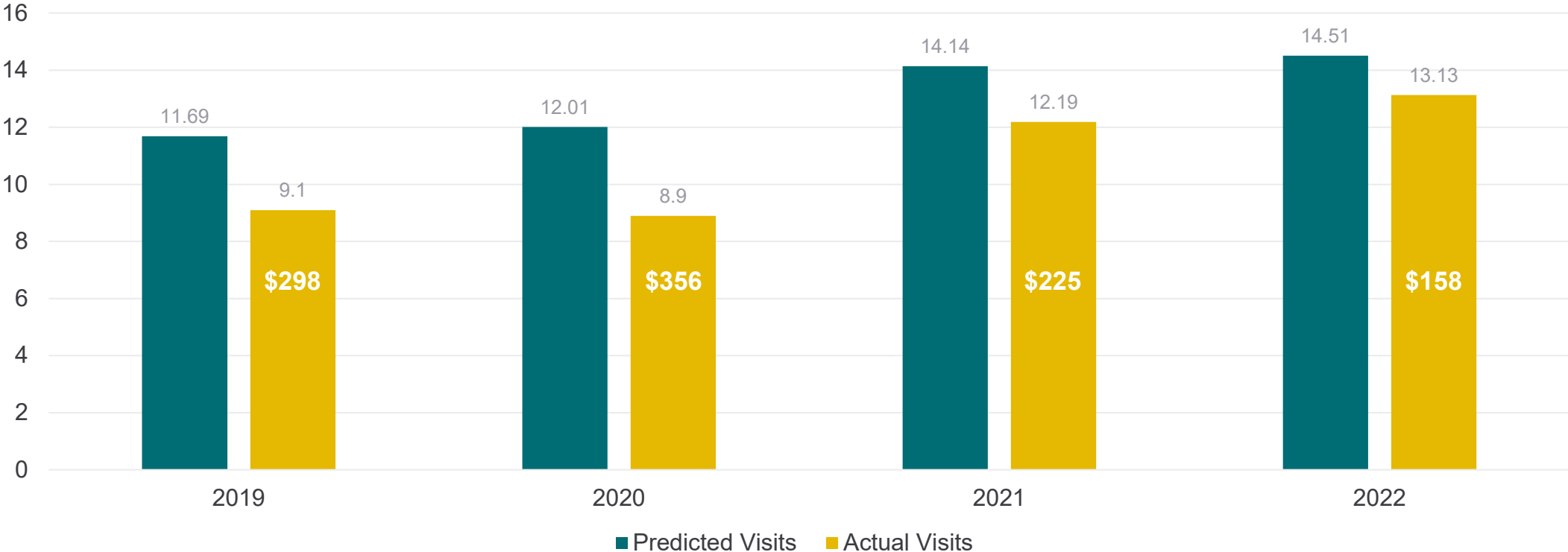
# Carolinas Rehabilitation

## Outcome National Rank



# Carolinas Rehabilitation

## Work Comp Cases: Direct Cost Savings with Atrium Health PT



# PM&R Opportunities Across the Occupational Continuum



## Hiring

Quantitative Job  
Demands Analysis

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Physical Ability Testing



## Active

Preventive Health

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Injury Mitigation

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On-site Care and Triage



## Return

Functional Based Rehab

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Functional Capacity Evaluations,  
Advanced Work Rehabilitation





# Hiring Phase

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## Quantitative Job Demands Analysis (QJDA)

A detailed job analysis of the tasks the employee performs daily and quantified by a highly trained clinical job analyst via measurement and observation.

- On-site evaluation of job demands including measuring of forces, the distance those forces are exerted, and the body demands of performing those tasks throughout the workday
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## Pre-Hire Physical Ability Testing (PAT)

This is the first step toward a more productive and less injury prone workforce.

- Physical demands test designed from the results of the QJDA
- Typically, a 45-minute test performed by trained clinicians either on-site or in clinic



# Hiring Phase

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## Pre-Hire Physical Ability Testing (PAT)

PAT programs enable employers to add scientifically validated and legally defensible protocols to their normal hiring process, helping them hire only those workers who are more capable of performing the physical demands of a job.

Similar to drug testing or criminal background checks, a conditional offer of employment is tendered, contingent upon the applicant passing a test of their job-related physical abilities.

- If applicant does not pass, the employer can rescind the job offer.

Case study results:

- ROI of up to 36:1
- 69% decrease in injury
- 90% decrease in injury cost



# Hiring Phase

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## Pre-Hire Physical Ability Testing (PAT)

PATs can help companies decrease injuries, injury related cost, and turnover.

- Lost days decreased by 18.5%, injury cost decreased by 79%, for every \$1 spent, \$18 saved
- Workers with strength abilities below job demands experience higher rates of injury
- 20% drop in turnover, 5% drop in injury, ROI \$6 for every \$1 spent



# Active Work Phase

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## Preventive Health

Ergonomic assessment and trainings

- Desk based demands as well as more physically demanding jobs

Employee movement analysis and trainings

- Specific job function training (e.g., loading a truck, working overhead)

Wellness education

- Lunch & learns, educational videos, etc.

Workplace exercise can help prevent and reduce work related pain

- Specific workplace exercise is more effective than home based exercise in reducing MSK pain, increasing muscle strength, and decreasing use of pain-relievers among health care workers, metal works, and office workers



# Injury Diagnosis & Recovery Phase

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On-site care (e.g., direct pay, self-insured)

Physical, occupational, and speech therapy

Progressive management of MSK disorders

Effectiveness of workplace rehabilitation in the treatment of LBP: systematic review

- 15 articles/10 studies were of sufficient quality to be included in the review
- The best evidence was that clinical interventions with occupational interventions as well as early return to work/modified work interventions were effective in returning workers to work faster, reducing pain and disability, and decreasing the rate of back injuries.
- Ergonomic interventions also were found to be effective workplace interventions.



# Return to Work Phase

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## Functional Capacity Evaluation

Standardized test that looks at physical capabilities for an 8-hour workday compared to specific occupational demands

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## Advanced Work Rehabilitation

*Work Conditioning* - Prepares the body to physically perform the job demands at work. A typical session may be 2-4 hours. Led by a physical therapist or occupational therapist. Focus is on improving general strength, endurance, flexibility, job-specific demands.

# Occupational Continuum

Biggest Opportunity



## Hiring

Quantitative Job Demands Analysis

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Physical Ability Testing



## Active

Preventive Health

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Injury Mitigation

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On-site Care and Triage



## Return

Functional Based Rehab

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Functional Capacity Evaluations, Advanced Work Rehabilitation



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# **Managing Medical Workers' Comp Claims**

**Best Practices Lead to Best Outcomes**

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**Jan Frye Hill, BSN, RN, CCM**

Workers' Comp Program Manager/Rehabilitation Program Coordinator  
Department of Orthopedic Surgery



# Key Individuals

Individuals who partner with insurance representatives to manage medical workers' comp claims:



Employer



Workers' Compensation  
Provider



Medical/Vocational  
Case Manager



# The Employer

- Timely reporting
- Works with the insurance adjuster to direct care to approved health care provider
- Maintains open lines of communication
- Accountability for attending appointments
- Provides written job descriptions
- Details out the light duty options
- Asks clarifying questions



# The Workers' Comp Provider

- Takes a detailed injury report
- Identifies causal relationship of injury
- Maintains a mindset of return-to-work
- Acts impartially
- Determines safe work recommendations
- Holds injured employee accountable
- Addresses injured worker concerns
- Collaborates and communicates with the treatment team including case manager
- Goal of Maximum Medical Improvement



# The Medical/ Vocational Case Manager

- Examples are a nurse, social worker, or vocational specialist
- Regulated by state laws
- Expert hired by an insurance company or an attorney
- Advocates for injured worker
- Coordinates medical care and treatment plans
- Communicates with all members of the team
- Cost containment mindset
- Goal to facilitate earlier return to work, case closure





# When to Use a Case Manager

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- Catastrophic cases in which more than one physician is involved
- Multiple injuries
- The adjuster is not familiar with local providers
- Recurrent injury from a claimant
- Current treatment exceeds or falls out of standard guidelines
- There are apparent psychological/social issues
- Difficulty in communicating with the injured worker
- The employee is not compliant with the treatment plan
- The employee has not made progress to return to the job of injury

# Why return-to-productivity matters.

“There is a large and growing body of scientific evidence that return-to-work usually provides **significant overall health benefit**, and staying off work needlessly results in poorer health outcomes

Employers, employees (patients), and insurers all benefit from individuals returning to work in usual time periods”

**James B. Talmage, MD**

*Author of AMA Guides to the Evolution of Work Ability and Return to Work*

# Questions?

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Click  
Request More  
Information

To learn more:



[AtriumHealth.org/EmployerServices](https://AtriumHealth.org/EmployerServices)

**Thank you.**