

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

Senate Select Interim Committee on Workers' Compensation
March 25, 2004
10:00 a.m.

Commissioner's Talking Points

- Thank you for inviting us to testify before your committee this (morning / afternoon). My name is Terry Murphy, etc.
 - In your March 4th letter, you asked me to provide testimony and written materials relating to four points, which I will cover today.
 - The materials in your packet cover more information than I plan to cover in my testimony, so if you have any questions feel free to ask me at any time.
- 1. First, you were interested in knowing generally how DARS serves the injured worker population of Texas and what criteria we use to determine eligibility. (See Tab 1 in your materials.)**
 - 2. Next, you wanted statistical information we collect on the number of injured workers we assist and our success training them for employment. (Direct members to Tab 5)**

Points to make:

- In SFY 2003, about 1 in 6 VR clients who applied for services was an injured worker.
 - During that same year, we served almost 24,000 clients who were injured on the job, or about 1 in 5 of all clients served in VR.
 - In each of the last two years, we've rehabilitated and employed between 3,000 and 4,000 injured workers.
 - The success rate with this population is approximately the same as for the general VR population.
- 3. You also asked for a description of the working relationship between DARS and the TWCC. (See tabs 6-8 and 10. Spend most time on the MOA with TWCC, Tab 8).**

Points to make:

- We have executed a Memorandum of Agreement with TWCC to assist them in tracking their claimants through the vocational rehabilitation process (signed by DARS January 2003, by TWCC October 2003).

- We are working with TWCC staff to obtain the first set of data pursuant to the MOA that will enable us to cross-match that population. We have agreed to report aggregated claimant outcomes to TWCC periodically.
- We provide TWCC with brochures that explain our services. They place the brochures in their field offices, and we also have a brochure in our field offices describing services for people injured on the job.

4. Finally, you asked us to identify challenges to serving this population and any suggestions for overcoming those challenges. (See Tab 9 in your packet.)

Points to make:

- Ensure that referrals to VR remain timely, because the earlier the injured worker becomes involved in return-to-work activities, the more likely they are to actually return to work. We can do this by working more closely with TWCC field offices at the local level.
- We are exchanging claimant information pursuant to the terms of our Memorandum of Agreement that will enable us to track this population through our program. We hope to discover ways to improve services to this population after studying the results.
- Develop cooperative training for DARS counselors on workers' comp rules and for TWCC staff on the process for assisting claimants through the VR program.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I'll be glad to answer any question you or the members might have.

###