

**Behavioral Health Return to Work Program
Kaiser Permanente Georgia
2002 Acclaim Award Honoree**

In October 1997, Kaiser Permanente developed the Return to Work (RTW) Program, a brief, intensive intervention designed to help patients on disability transition back into the workforce. Patients participate in a series of “drop-in” group appointments that address common work stress topics. As of July 2001, 800 patients have been referred, and 70 percent have successfully completed the program.

Goal

To significantly improve the care of patients whose work disability status is for behavioral health reasons due primarily to work-related stressors

Intervention

Brief, intensive counseling sessions help transition patients expeditiously back into the workforce.

Highlights

- “Drop-in” two-hour RTW group sessions are held weekday afternoons.
- Although RTW is “drop-in,” patients who fail to attend RTW sequential group meetings are subject to revocation of disability certification due to treatment non-compliance.
- Patients know their tentative work-return date from the day of entry into the program (usually within one to three weeks). Status is reassessed weekly through a treatment team approach (primary therapist, the RTW therapist, and medication prescribing clinician).
- Upon discharge, patients are referred back to their primary behavioral health therapist.
- The RTW Program is now fully integrated with the Intensive Outpatient Program (a crisis stabilization program), leading to increased RTW referrals upon successful IOP completion.

Results

Return To Work (RTW)	1998	1999	2000	2001
Referral Rate (per 1000 members per year)	0.58	0.62	0.63	0.95
Dropout Rate (began but did not complete)	16%	16%	14%	14%
Successful Discharge Rate (completed/referred)	69%	69%	71%	72%
Average Weeks to Return to Work (assumes attendance at 3 week sessions per week)	1.7	1.7	2.6	2.6
RTW Rate (same or different employer)	92%	93%	97%	97%