

Voucher Public Meeting Comments - October 2, 2012

What is the timeline for the new voucher process? It is confusing as to when job descriptions should be completed and 60 days is not enough time to get physician input on completed job descriptions of regular duties, and proposed modified duties.

Some employers still use the old vocational rehabilitation forms to discuss return to work options early on in a claim.

The RU-91 Job Description form is still used and is very useful.

In the olden days, job descriptions were triggered by 90 days of temporary disability at that point there would be vocational rehabilitation discussions.

Are there any more notice of potential eligibility letters?

If vouchers are all now \$6,000, the voucher can just be sent. There should be some notice to the employee that they are getting the voucher because they have not been offered any work. A standardized cover letter should accompany the voucher that explains how to receive reimbursements.

The claims administrator should know the expiration date of the voucher at the time it is sent; they should include it on the form so that it is clear when the voucher expires.

Would it make sense to have a proof of service on the P&S report and voucher to get time clocks started? "Receipt" equals 5 days for mailed documents.

Employers are required to engage in the interactive process of the ADA, so the regulations should be drafted with ADA timelines in mind. 60 days is not enough to make offers of work. Sometimes, it takes a long time to get a physician's opinion on work restrictions. Employers should not have to furnish vouchers as they work on making offers of work. The regulations should provide for "initial offer of work."

There are people that ask the doctor to release them to full duty so that they can go back to work but then re-injure themselves. Do they get another voucher every time they file a new claim?

Vouchers are never used. I've issued 2 and I've been in claims for 20 years.

Vouchers are not used because they are discussed so late in the claims process they are impractical. The 60 and 20 day timelines will hopefully help to make vouchers useful.

There is no more 15% permanent disability bump up/down. There are no incentives to getting people back to work, just send them a voucher that is never recovered.

The miscellaneous expenses are a “giveaway.” Is there any requirement that an employee be in an actual educational program? Isn't that the purpose of vouchers? It looks like the computer expense and miscellaneous expenses can be provided in every case. Everyone will be requesting that money.

Why will there be no more notice of potential eligibility letters? Injured workers should be warned that their vouchers will be expiring maybe 6 months before so that they can utilize the benefits. Injured workers get so little in benefits they need notice.