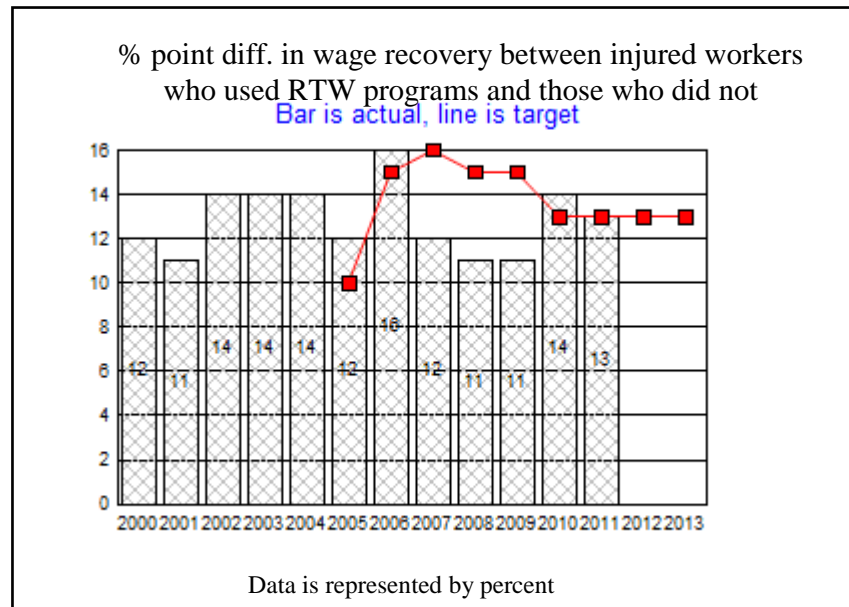


<b>KPM #7</b>	WAGE RECOVERY FOR INJURED WORKERS – Difference in percentage wage recovery for workers who use return-to-work programs versus workers who do not.	1999
<b>Goal</b>	DCBS Goal #1: Protect consumers and workers in Oregon.	
<b>Oregon Context</b>	Oregon Benchmark #9: Oregon's national rank in the cost of doing business.	
<b>Data Source</b>	Workers' Compensation and Employment Department data files.	
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**1. OUR STRATEGY**

Restore injured workers to a self-sufficient status and lower costs for employers by increasing the use of return-to-work (RTW) programs. The Oregon RTW programs help employers and injured workers by providing incentives for getting workers back to work quickly. This results in better outcomes for the injured workers and lower costs for

employers.

## 2. ABOUT THE TARGETS

This measure compares the difference in wage rates between injured workers with disabling claims using return-to-work programs and similarly injured workers who did not use the programs. Our targets reflect our goal of getting workers back to work quickly with wages that are equivalent or better than before their injury.

## 3. HOW WE ARE DOING

The return-to-work programs help approximately 8,000 workers per year. In 2011, workers who used return-to-work programs had a wage rate 13 percentage points higher than those who qualified but did not use the programs. There are significant benefits to injured workers who take advantage of the programs, particularly for the more severely injured workers who would otherwise face significantly greater earning challenges after being injured. Oregon employers also recognize the programs' value evidenced by the large number of employers who use them.

## 4. HOW WE COMPARE

Oregon's return-to-work programs are nationally recognized and unique to Oregon. Many other jurisdictions have sought to introduce these programs in their jurisdictions due to the successes in Oregon. A 2008 study by the Workers' Compensation Research Institute highlights Oregon's return-to-work programs as one of four key lessons other states can learn from Oregon. According to the study, "Oregon policymakers have fashioned some potentially powerful program elements aimed at stimulating early return to work and long-term recovery of wages for injured workers."

## 5. FACTORS AFFECTING RESULTS

Changes in the Oregon economy or in business practices may affect this measure by reducing or increasing opportunities for job openings. Also affecting results are changes in laws, rules, or WCD initiatives during the various times employees and employers trigger the use of these programs. For example, the Workers' Compensation Division has streamlined the rules and processes for the Employer-at-Injury Program to enable more workers and their employers to participate. This resulted in significant growth in the use of these programs during the past several years, benefitting both the injured workers and the employers.

## 6. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

WCD will continue to provide education and outreach that promotes use of the return-to-work programs and dispute resolution services for vocational assistance matters. In addition, WCD has implemented incentives to those who help injured workers find new vocations and jobs, and further decreased the time it takes for return-to-work services to be

provided to workers and their employers.

## **7. ABOUT THE DATA**

To see the effects of return-to-work programs, it is necessary to track injured workers' wages over time. The data reported for 2011 represents wages of workers who were injured during the calendar year 2007. The data represents wages in the 13th quarter after injury for workers using the return-to-work programs administered by WCD, compared to injured workers who did not use return-to-work programs or, in the case of vocational assistance, who did not complete their vocational assistance training. Wages of each group are adjusted for inflation and for those workers no longer in the workforce (due to retirement, moving out of state, etc.). We compare their pre-injury wages with their wages 13 quarters after injury. For example, if a worker is injured in the first quarter of 2007 (Jan. 1, 2007 to March 31, 2007), we would measure their wages 13 quarters later (April 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011). For fiscal year 2011, there were 4,360 return-to-work participants, compared with 4,389 injured workers who were eligible but did not participate.