
Y-12 National Security Complex

Can this Employee Return Safely to Work? A Framework for Managing an Aging Workforce

Otis Cosby, MD, MSPH (Medical Director)

Mary Benton, PhD, MPH, RN (Health Promotion Coordinator)

Levette Harris-Bethea, BS (Wellness Coordinator)

September 15, 2010



Authors Biographies

Otis Cosby, MD, MSPH

Dr. Cosby is currently the Medical Director of Occupational Health Services at B&W Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where he has served in this role since October, 2004. He is primarily responsible for oversight of the clinic operation and works to ensure that high quality occupational health services are delivered to the 5,000 employees at the site. Prior to his position at Y-12, Dr. Cosby was the director and an assistant professor in the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. Additional roles during his tenure at Meharry included an assignment as the Civil Service Medical Examiner for the Metro Nashville City government employees, the Employee Health physician for the Alvin C. York Veteran Affairs Hospital in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and numerous consulting positions with local industries including the General Electric Motors plant in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, the General Motors Corvette Assembly plant in Bowling Green, Kentucky, the Tennessee State Disability Determination Service and the TRW Commercial Steering Gear plant in Lebanon, Tennessee (through the Whole Health Management company).

Authors Biographies (continue)

Dr. Cosby (continue)

Dr. Cosby is board-certified in Occupational Medicine and is a past- president of the Tennessee College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. He is a fellow in the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine and is currently an adjunct associate professor in the School of Graduate Studies and Research at Meharry Medical College.

Mary Benton, PhD, MPH, RN

Dr. Benton is currently the Health Promotions Coordinator at B&W Y-12 National Security Complex and is primarily responsible for on-site chronic disease management programs, disability management and productivity initiatives. She has been an employee working in various capacities for DOE/ NNSA in Oak Ridge, Tennessee for the past 19 years and 12 of those years have been spent at Y-12 as a compliance training manager, human resources manager for critical thinking skills mentoring and job rotation programs, a Behavior-Based Safety (BBS) internal consultant and a member of the Safe Work Improvements Group.

Authors Biographies (continue)

Dr. Benton (continue)

Dr. Benton received a PhD degree in Community Health and Human Factors Engineering and a Masters Degree in Public Health (MPH) from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. She is also a licensed registered nurse (RN) with clinical experience in intensive care, coronary care, and orthopedic nursing.

Levette Harris-Bethea, BS

Mrs. Harris-Bethea is currently the Wellness Coordinator at B&W Y-12 and has served in this role for the past two (2) years. She is responsible for managing and coordinating activities and facilities instrumental in the implementation and maintenance of the health and productivity management program at Y-12. She has over 11 years of experience in health science education and health promotion and began her career as a corporate wellness coordinator at the Bay Medical HealthPlex in Panama City, Florida. Levette is a 1997 graduate of the University of Florida (Gainesville) where she earned a bachelor of science degree in Health Science Education with an emphasis in corporate wellness. She currently holds certifications by the American College of Exercise as both a Group Fitness Instructor and a Personal Trainer.

Outline of Presentation

- I. Background on an Aging Workforce - Cosby
- II. Case Presentation - Cosby
- III. Return to Work (RTW) Process - Benton
- IV. Wellness Program – Bethea
- V. Conclusion - Cosby
- VI. Questions - All

Background on an Aging Workforce (Cosby)

- What is the senior workers' composition of the workforce?
- What are the expected signs and symptoms associated with aging?
- What are some general challenges for employers (ADA, productivity levels, medical insurance coverage)?
- What is a framework for addressing RTW issues in older workers (a Y-12 approach)?

Case Presentation (Cosby)

- **Mr. T.B. is a 65 year old gentleman who presents to Occupational Health Services.**
 - ***Occupation:*** safety engineer
 - ***Time off:*** three (3) months
 - ***Medical Conditions:*** uncontrolled hypertension, osteoarthritis, status/post bilateral cataract surgery, and depression
 - ***Temporary restrictions:*** limited walking, work half-days for 2 weeks-then a regular work shift, no lifting over 10 lbs., and no excessive stooping or bending.
- **Mr. T.B. is eager to return to work and has expressed an interest in the new wellness program and has received written permission from his primary care physician (PCP) to use the fitness facility.**

Return To Work Process (Benton)

- Employee health conditions/temporary medical restrictions reviewed
- Decision to accommodate employee
 - Benefits plan medical case review meeting held
 - Transitional work-job task bank reviewed
 - RTW Plan developed (next page)
 - Physical demands of job reviewed
 - Progress reviewed/modifications made as needed
 - Rehabilitation services considered



Return to Work Process: Details of Work Plan (Benton)

- **Phased return to work/transcribe the job-task entries into work plan**
 - Job description
 - Required training
 - Medical restrictions/limitations
 - Start date/expected end date
 - Tasks/physical demands required
 - Age related safety or health considerations; co-morbidities
- **Recovery progress and medical restrictions review**

Overall goal:

Return to pre-injury/pre-illness job (with or without accommodations) and perform tasks in a safe manner.

Wellness Program (Bethesda)

- Unique challenges
- Necessary interventions
 - Programming
 - Staff recommendations
 - Equipment requirements



Wellness Program: Cardiovascular equipment (Bethea)



- Should minimize impact on the joints
- Should be easy to get on and off
- Should be durable
- Should be Physical Therapy compatible

Wellness Program: Dashboard Entertainment (Bethea)



- Safer
- Less Distracting
- Educational

Wellness Program: Flexibility (Bethea)



- Easy to access
- Safe
- Educational
- Small footprint

Wellness Program (Bethea)

TRUESTRETCH™

Follow steps below for best results:

- POSITION** yourself as illustrated.
- BREATHE** at your normal, comfortable pattern.
- MOVE** slowly in the direction of the arrow.
- STRETCH** to where your feet ache.
- HOLD** each stretch 7-9 seconds and repeat 3 times.
- REVERSE** when advised (reversing certain body positions, chest, upper body, and arms to opposite side and repeat stretch).
- ALTERNATE** (when advised) (bring opposite leg toward stretch).

Recommended stretches for specific activities:

Activity	55	65	75	85
Swimming	55	65	75	85
Walking	55	65	75	85
Weight Training - Upper Body	45	55	65	75
Weight Training - Lower Body	45	55	65	75
Cardio	55	65	75	85
Yoga	55	65	75	85
Triathlon	55	65	75	85

TRUE
Fitness Solutions

NECK & SHOULDERS	UPPER BACK & SHOULDERS	SPINE & THUMB	MID-BACK & SPINE	LOWER BACK & HIPS	HEELS & CALVES	HAIRS & HIPS	FEET & THUMB	SHOES & HIPS	NECK & HIPS

Conclusion: Can this Employee Return Safely to Work? (Cosby)

- Consider all factors in the RTW process for individual employees (i.e. legal issues, job placement, levels of productivity, continued well-being)
- Implement plant-wide programs to improve health and productivity
- Support efforts to increase research on an aging workforce and to identify best practices in addressing employer concerns
- Special Note: Mr. T.B. is doing well and has decided to become a 'body-builder'.

Questions?



Contact Information for Authors:

- 1) Otis Cosby, MD; 865-574-1571; cosbyojr@y12.doe.gov
- 2) Mary Benton, PhD; 865-576-7251; bentonml@y12.doe.gov
- 3) Levette Harris-Bethea, BS; 865-241-3968; harrisbethsl@y12.doe.gov

Disclaimer

This work of authorship and those incorporated herein were prepared by Contractor as accounts of work sponsored by an agency of the United States Government. Neither the United States Government nor any agency thereof, nor Contractor, nor any of their employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, use made, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately owned rights. Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the United States Government or any agency or Contractor thereof. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Government or any agency or Contractor thereof.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

This document has been authored by a subcontractor of the U.S. Government under contract DE-AC05-00OR-22800. Accordingly, the U.S. Government retains a paid-up, nonexclusive, irrevocable, worldwide license to publish or reproduce the published form of this contribution, prepare derivative works, distribute copies to the public, and perform publicly and display publicly, or allow others to do so, for U. S. Government purposes.