



OPTIMIZED OUTCOME SOLUTIONS

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Getting What You've Always Got by Brian Allen

March 29, 2022 – We are all familiar with the aphorism, "if you do what you have always done, you will get what you've always got." That's fine if you are in a place of unmatched success. Most of us aren't there and want to find ways to improve our outcomes. The workers' compensation industry has a pernicious issue with baffling poor outcomes for some injured workers. Many workers are diligent about getting better on their own, but there is a large segment of injured workers who should get better, but never do. No matter how much medical care the employer provides, some workers never get well and, in some cases, never return to work. I believe patient education can be the change that moves employers and injured workers away from most of the poor outcomes both sides tragically suffer. Injured workers yearn to better understand their role in the recovery process and what to expect as they make that voyage. I am coming to believe that injured workers want to get better, they just don't know how.

I've spent the last nineteen years working on laws and regulations governing how care is administered to injured workers, what it costs, who pays for it, and how the claim process is managed. There is a whole body of law and rules telling everyone in the system how they should behave, but almost nothing is said about educating injured workers on their critical role in achieving a good outcome.

At industry conferences, seminars and webinars during the last few years, there has been increasing talk about a more compassionate, worker-centric approach for treating injured workers, but there seems to be little movement. In his book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," Stephen R. Covey likens breaking our current habits to an Apollo rocket leaving the gravitational pull of the earth. He states, "More energy was spent in the first few minutes of lift-off, in the first few miles of travel, than was used over the next several days to travel half a million miles." Overcoming habits, or effecting change requires that same expenditure of energy in the beginning stages of evolution. So, while nearly every thought leader in the workers' compensation industry has opined on the value of a worker-centric approach to recovery, the needle hasn't moved much on overcoming "what we have always done."

It is important that industry leaders continue to talk about how to improve outcomes and to sow the seeds of change, but it is also critically important to expend the energy to break the gravity of our habits and be willing to try new, innovative approaches. Talking is good, doing is better.

Optimized Outcome Solutions is talking and doing. I have helped guide the development of a program whose whole focus is on educating injured workers and providing a "live" recovery guide to help them learn what they need to do to increase their chances for an optimized outcome. This is an innovative educational approach that will lead the industry forward and away "from what they've always got." Most injured workers have never experienced the workers' compensation system and it can be daunting. Coupled with the added anxiety that comes with needed medical care, procedures and, time away from their job, what injured workers need most is guidance. The question is, as their employer or claims manager, are you going to provide access to that help or leave them to seek it out via an internet search or legal counsel?



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Said another way, who do you want helping your injured worker through the recovery process, Google, or a plaintiff's lawyer? Would you consider a caring recovery guide whose only focus is providing the coaching and information necessary for an optimized outcome? Companies like Optimized Outcome Solutions are expending the time and money to overcome the gravitational pull of how things have always been done. I encourage all of the thoughtful and caring industry leaders who are my colleagues and friends to spend a little energy and effort to achieve better results. Let's stop doing what we have always done. Let's move forward with patient education and get better than we have always got.

About Optimized Outcome Solutions

For decades patients have been disengaged from their own recovery primarily due to a lack of information and education. Optimized Outcome Solutions re-engages program participants in their recovery and provides them with the education and interaction they need to help them achieve an optimized outcome. Optimized Outcome Solutions is currently working with injured workers in Texas and is expanding to other areas. Visit www.optimizedoutcome.com for more information.