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**DM DIALOGUE EDITORIAL STATEMENT**

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**| New Global Professionals**



*Presentations took place in November 2012 for 33 Certified Disability Management Professionals on both sides of the Atlantic, which has highlighted a global recognition of the need to improve outcomes for ill and injured workers.*

*Twenty-one employees and management staff from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) of Ontario received their CDMP certificates in Toronto on November 28, while in Edinburgh, 12 successful candidates from Scotland's National Health Service (NHS) were recognized on November 30.*



**CANADA**

In 2012, a total of 88 individuals successfully achieved the Certified Return to Work Coordinator (CRTWC) and the Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) designations. The individuals who wrote the examinations were from right across Canada and represent all stakeholder groups. The designations are being recognized as a quality standard by employers as it was noted in a random review of job boards, there were 10 positions listed requiring the designations on one national job board for the province of Ontario alone during the month of November 2012. Also, the Canadian Society of Professionals in Disability Management, which provides job postings as a service to its members, reported that it had received requests for 50 job postings during 2012.

The cohort of individuals from the WSIB of Ontario (pictured above) included Vice-President for Work Reintegration, Judy Geary. Geary, who serves on the NIDMAR Board of Directors, said that after years of promoting the CDMP program to the world, she decided to undergo the process herself. "We were asking our staff – managers in particular – to devote a lot of time and energy towards undertaking the training in prepara-



tion for the examination,” Geary said. “I felt it was important to be a role model, as a senior leader in the program, to show that I wasn’t asking them to do anything I wasn’t prepared to do.”

It was a back-to-school experience, according to Geary. “For some people, it had been a long time since they had been in a formalized learning environment where there were lectures to attend, plus homework assignments, exercises to do, extra readings and an examination.” Twenty-one of the WSIB candidates wrote the exam, while three elected to postpone. “We wrote the examination on Halloween Day and everybody passed,” Geary said.

WSIB chief operating officer John Slinger said the certification program demonstrated the level of commitment among staff to improving services and providing better outcomes for injured and ill workers. “The participants were enthusiastic throughout the program, and we’re clearly proud of them achieving their CDMP designation. I’m pleased that WSIB now has such a large number of CDMP designated RTW experts on its staff,” Slinger said.

More importantly, Geary said, that even though every candidate had previous training and involvement in RTW, each felt they had learned a lot and had benefited from the program.

Gail Kovacs, co-principal of KMG Health Partners, attended the ceremony in Toronto as well as the one in Edinburgh (see following story re the United Kingdom). In the UK, KMG holds the license for delivery of the continuing professional development educational modules. Until August 2012, Kovacs was Director of Program Development for the WSIB, serving as Professional Practices Lead for vocational rehabilitation and disability management. “My role was to professionalize the individuals who were delivering services for the WSIB in the work reintegration program,” Kovacs said. “We were able to obtain support from senior management for about 24 individuals to write the CDMP examination.”



## UNITED KINGDOM



In Scotland, the fields of occupational health and safety, health promotion and vocational rehabilitation are overseen by the Centre for Healthy Working Lives, which is in turn, one of five directorates within NHS Scotland Health. For the past three years, Kathleen Houston, Development Manager for Voc Rehab, has recruited candidates to undergo CDMP certification.

Houston said the goal has been to integrate the skill sets of the various practitioners such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists, etc., to allow them to work in multidisciplinary teams. “They all come with different levels of expertise. I’m trying to find that commonality – that starting place – for experts to turn their focus towards the workplace,” Houston said. “That is what we were lacking in Scotland.”

When tasked with putting together a set of pilot projects, Houston said she needed a training program that would put all the various experts on the same page. “I looked around at the various courses that could meet that need, and I was pointed in the direction of NIDMAR,” Houston said. “They have been our baseline from where people would start from.”

The candidates were required to attend full-day lectures and complete an assignment; many were required to negotiate time off work to complete the training, which ran between January and early May, with the exam at the end of May. “The social diary had to close,” she said. “It’s a high level of commitment from these folks.”

Since 2007, Graham Halsey has overseen the delivery of the CDMP examination in the UK, which is offered under the auspices of the International Disability Management Standards Council (IDMSC). Halsey led the first group of UK candidates to seek CDMP certification by undertaking



the process himself. "It was my job to train the individuals through the exam, and, by the way, pass it myself." Halsey said that having lived through the experience himself makes him better able to shepherd candidates through the process. "The examination is a monster. It's seven hours long," he said.

In the UK, there are now 140 CDMPs from a wide spectrum of private and public organizations. Of those, 35 are with NHS Scotland Health. "In the UK, the CDMP is the only recognized vocational rehabilitation qualification. This is taking people working in the field to a new level," Halsey said, adding that in the UK, Scotland is taking the lead.

Houston said that currently, once a practitioner completes a first degree in Voc Rehab, their prospects for specialization are limited. But that is changing. "We have already been in discussions with one university in Scotland," Houston said. "We managed to get two modules at the Masters level introduced, one about Policy and the other about Practice. Gently, gently, I am pushing the doors open."

KMG Health Partners holds the license for delivery of the continuing professional development educational modules in the UK and co-principal Gail Kovacs said, "KMG is now working to get the NIDMAR modules accredited against their standard institutions of education so that, if you take a module, it will count towards your degree." She indicated that the Scottish university system is most similar to that found in Europe, compared to the rest of the UK. "If we can get accredited under the Scottish system, it places the program in a good position to achieve this in other European countries".



## NEW ZEALAND



New Zealand held examinations in May and November in 2012. Ten individuals successfully passed the professional certification examinations. Four candidates gained the Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) certification, with six gaining the Certified Return to Work Coordinator (CRTWC) certification. Five people now hold both certification designations in New Zealand. The new certificate holders come from a variety of backgrounds, including physiotherapy, nursing, and injury and case management. The majority work within Government.

## MALAYSIA



Ten individuals successfully passed the Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) certification examination in 2012. All successful candidates work for SOCSO / PERKESO, Malaysia's Social Security Organization. The individuals all had professional backgrounds in a related field, such as physiotherapy, psychology, environmental health and safety and human resources. Nine individuals were case managers and one was a job placement officer.

## HONG KONG



Three individuals were successful in passing the Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) examination in 2012. Individuals applying to write the examination mostly came from local hospitals and residential care homes. All had healthcare as their background and all were involved in the return to work or disability management program within their organizations. One applicant was from an occupational rehabilitation company that offers return to work program service to clients, and is involved in managing the return to work program in client organizations.





**GERMANY**



One hundred and seventy individuals wrote the professional certification examinations in Germany during 2012. One hundred and ten work within organizations, while 60 work externally providing RTW / DM services to organizations. In Germany, almost 10 percent of individuals with the professional designation are Occupational Health Physicians. There is an approximate ratio of 50-50 male to female individuals who hold the professional designations and perform the roles and responsibilities. For those who work within organizations, approximately 35 percent work in Human Resources.

**AUSTRALIA**



Australia held the CDMP examination in Melbourne and Sydney in June 2012 and five individuals successfully passed the CDMP examination. The five successful candidates came from the States of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. The new certification holders came from a variety of backgrounds, including a Case Management Advisor who works for Virgin Australia, a Rehabilitation Advisor who works for QBE, two Senior Consultants who work for Mutual Solutions Australia and a Project Delivery Officer who works for the Personal Injury Education Foundation.



| Around the Globe

**IFDM 2014**

At the conclusion of IFDM 2012 in September in London, UK, the transfer was made to the Accident Compensation Corporation of New Zealand. IFDM 2014 will be held in Auckland, New Zealand November 17-19, 2014 and will be co-hosted by the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and the Personal Injury Education Foundation (PIEF). The theme for IFDM 2014 is "Disability Management: Pushing beyond the boundaries." Further details can be found on the website at: [www.ifdm2014.com.au](http://www.ifdm2014.com.au)



**IFDM 2016**

Please keep in mind that IFDM 2016 will take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia hosted by SOCSO, Malaysia's Social Security Organization. Malaysia will be celebrating its tenth anniversary of the development of their RTW program. SOCSO covers both employment-related injuries and diseases as well as an invalidity insurance, and since the inception of their program, they reported in 2010 that they had been successful in returning to work around three quarters of the over 4,250 workers involved, with the remaining either seeking employment or were still participating in a rehabilitation program.





## ISSA RTW GUIDELINES

Return to Work (RTW) Guidelines have been developed as a result of a Memorandum of Understanding signed in late 2011 as a collaboration arrangement between the International Social Security Association (ISSA), a United Nations sub-organization headquartered in Geneva having 333 members in 153 countries; the International Disability Management Standards Council (IDMSC); and Rehabilitation International (RI) which has members in 100 countries.

The partners set up a Working Group to develop the Guidelines, which are to provide social security organizations around the world with a framework and tools required to establish RTW programs, and meeting the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The first draft was reviewed by the Technical Commission of ISSA in October 2012 and was then distributed internationally for input and feedback. Once that feedback was received, it was circulated to the Working Group for further review. The final document was completed at the end of January 2013 and will go to the ISSA Board for final approval in November 2013 and then for general release.

In the meantime, a toolkit is being developed to provide practical tools for organizations for their use in the development of national return to work programs around the world.

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## STEELWORKERS SUPPORT BETTER RTW OUTCOMES FOR INJURED/DISABLED WORKERS

The Canadian National Office of the United Steelworkers signed an agreement with the International Disability Management Standards Council (IDMSC) to help workers and workplaces achieve better return to work (RTW) outcomes by providing access to an internationally adopted RTW self-assessment tool.

Canadian National President Ken Neumann said, "In May 2012, we commemorated the 20th anniversary of a terrible Canadian workplace tragedy, the Westray mine explosion. But with over 1,000 workers killed annually in Canada, and the recent explosions at two sawmills in British Columbia where four steelworkers were tragically killed, these devastating accidents continue. However, we must not forget that for every worker killed through an industrial accident

or disease, not counting non-industrial injuries and illnesses, 20 workers suffer permanent physical or mental impairments, often forever affecting every aspect of their lives."

A sad reality is that suffering a permanent physical or mental impairment also means the loss of gainful employment and all too many times, injured/disabled workers are pushed to the margins of society. "We have an absolute obligation to ensure that injured/disabled workers can maintain employment, continue to support their families and rebuild all-too-often shattered lives. I believe that access to this RTW guide will assist in that process", said Neumann.

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## POSITIVE RESULTS OF DM PROGRAM IN LONG TERM CARE / CONTINUING CARE FACILITIES

In 2008, the British Columbia government, together with WorkSafeBC and the Healthcare Benefit Trust, provided funding for a range of organizations to undergo assessments of their Disability Management programs utilizing internationally accepted DM/RTW assessment tools.

As a result of the assessments in the long term / community care sector, eight facilities partnered together, working with the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) and with funding from WorkSafeBC, were able to share the services of one Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) for what turned out to be a very successful two-year pilot project, resulting in a 5:1 return on a net cash basis, in addition to the significant and often immeasurable social benefits. Also, partly as a result of the initiative, DM has now become part of a new collective agreement between the industry unions and the employer.

To review and/or download a copy of the Final Report of the pilot project, please visit the NIDMAR website at the following URL and look for "Haro Park and Partners Benefit from DM": [http://www.nidmar.ca/news/news\\_news/news\\_current.asp](http://www.nidmar.ca/news/news_news/news_current.asp)



## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AND MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA RELEASE NATIONAL STANDARD FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

The Government of Canada and the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) released earlier this year the *National Standard of Canada* entitled, “Psychological health and safety in the workplace – Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation.”

The national standard is a voluntary standard intended to provide systematic guidelines for Canadian employers that will help enable them to develop and continuously improve psychologically safe and healthy work environments for their employees.

Members of the MHCC made recent trips to Australia and New Zealand. The Mental Health Commission of Canada and the National Mental Health Commission of Australia have signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding to share knowledge and successful practices in mental health research. And while in New Zealand, the MHCC were among 300 leaders and experts in mental health from eight countries sharing best practices in mental health and disability services at the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL) exchange in Auckland.

The national standard is available through the website of the Mental Health Commission of Canada at: <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/default.aspx>



## | Profiles

### CDMP WORKS TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT FOR AN AGING WORKFORCE

For Sheena Wight, becoming a CDMP was a matter of following her own prescription for clients. Wight, who holds a master’s degree in occupational therapy, was one of 12 candidates selected from the National Health Service (NHS) Scotland to undertake the professional certification program track in 2012.

Currently, she serves as OT manager for East Lothian and Midlothian council areas, with a total population of about 200,000. “I’ve been a practicing occupational therapist for 31 years,” Wight said. “I have worked with NHS Scotland in OT and also in the social work sector, as well as with a charitable organization and in higher education.”

NHS deals with the full spectrum of occupational and non-occupational illness and injury as well as mental health and the elderly. Wight manages teams in areas such as physical rehabilitation for adults and older people, mental health for adults and older people, along with two learning disabilities teams, and she “occasionally” takes on clients with complex needs.

“My main clinical interest has always been adults with neurological disorders – people who have had a stroke or a head injury, or MS or Parkinson’s. As part of an OT program, rehabilitation will focus on return to work as well as a person’s self-care, leisure and independence.” With a rapidly aging population, the United Kingdom is facing a crisis in health-care, and professionals like Wight are well aware that big changes are evolving.

“With the increasing numbers of people surviving longer, and the increasing number of people with dementia, the changing demographics for Britain are that, by 2030, if we don’t change the model of what we’re doing with our older people, every school-leaver will have to go into the caring profession. And by 2030, if we keep the current model of care for our older folks, we will have to open a new nursing home every two weeks, which is not going to happen.”

Wight said there is now an increased emphasis on better equipping people with the skills they will require to look after





themselves as they reach older ages. That includes helping them remain on the job, if that is their goal. "Keeping people able to work is critical. Work, as long as you are not in an overly stressful environment, is good for your health."

And Wight also believes governments around the world must increase their efforts to deal with mental illness both in the workplace and in the general population, especially with the unfolding demographic crisis that will ultimately place a heavy burden on upcoming generations.

It was that need for change, in part, that inspired Wight to undertake the DM training along with other NHS Scotland candidates. "I found it very energizing. The group that I was in was just a great bunch of folks. It was quite a learning curve for me in some respects," Wight said. The cohort contained a mix of occupational therapists, physiotherapists and one RN, and generated stimulating conversations.

As for the certification examination, Wight's reaction mirrors that of many graduates. When your personal preference is to explore every question from all sides and justify the case for your answer, selecting the correct answer from a list of options can be stressful.

Wight said that she does not have any career change in mind at the moment, but having a CDMP does broaden one's options. "The bulk of my work is around managing teams. I don't see a lot of real life patients and I do miss that," she said. With her CDMP in hand, Wight says she is determined to be part of the process as the British health system evolves to accommodate the growing demographic bulge of seniors. "I intend to be working for a long time," she said.



## **DM TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION KEY TO CAREER PROSPECTS**

For Fiona Kennedy, a case manager for Lanarkshire National Health Service Scotland, becoming a CDMP has opened up a host of career opportunities that were once unattainable.

Kennedy was one of 12 CDMP candidates from NHS Scotland to undergo the NIDMAR training through KMG Health Partners and write the professional certification examination in 2012.

Kennedy has been a practicing case manager for Salus Occupational Health and Safety, part of NHS Lanarkshire, for about five years now, at first working with the long-term unemployed and employees of small businesses, addressing complex and multiple health and social difficulties in order to achieve health gain and increase opportunities to access or remain within employment.

In the United Kingdom, the Department of Work and Pensions manages welfare reform and tenders contracts geared towards increasing the working population. Scottish government, local authorities and NHS bodies all tender contracts to help tackle health and social inequalities. Salus bids for these contracts either as a prime provider or a subcontractor. These are large national contracts where the case management is conducted over the telephone. The case manager assesses clients and action plans, sources local services/resources and then encourages and supports individuals to take control of their situation and make positive progress.

A contract that Kennedy worked on was Working Health Services, through the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives. As a result of this association, she was invited by Kathleen Houston, Development Manager for Vocational Rehabilitation for NHS Scotland Health, to take the NIDMAR training. Kennedy said that despite her fears about having a higher learning academic background, she was able to draw on her extensive work experience.

In a world that is placing more and more emphasis on degrees and professional certificates, Kennedy feels she has increased her career prospects significantly. "Prior to the CDMP, I wouldn't have been considered for any type of promotion, because I didn't have a degree or certificate. This gives me the validation to take the next step."



Since gaining her CDMP, Kennedy has moved into a new internal role for NHS Lanarkshire where she is developing a new service aimed at supporting NHS staff members who are experiencing mental health issues. “We have identified trends of increasing mental health absences within our own staff base. We have significant levels of data proving that the case management method really works. We were offering the service to our external contracts but it wasn’t available to our own staff. I saw this as a fantastic opportunity to utilize my CDMP knowledge within a large unionized organization to provide a person-centered, holistic service to my colleagues. It’s still early days, but the service is being really well received and I am confident that this will result in decreased anxiety and depression levels, overall health gain and shorter absences.”

## | Special Recognition

The International Labour Organization (ILO), a specialized agency of the United Nations located in Geneva, identifies April 28 as “World Day for Safety and Health at Work”. This day is recognized each year in most countries around the world under various monikers, but the sentiment is the same, and the numbers are horrific. According to their website, the ILO estimates 2.34 million occupational fatalities every year. Please visit their website for further details: [http://www.ilo.org/safework/events/meetings/WCMS\\_204594/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/safework/events/meetings/WCMS_204594/lang-en/index.htm)

### EARN PROFESSIONAL CREDITS

As a CDMP or CRTWC, you can earn CEC hours by writing articles for Disability Management Dialogue. One article of between 300 and 750 words equates to 3.5 CEC hours. Articles over 750 words are afforded five CEC hours. DM Dialogue is seeking articles from members, on the following topics:

- successful DM case studies
- program profiles
- best practices
- leading edge research
- program evaluation studies/results
- DM tips and ideas that work
- successful accommodations
- working with assistive devices

Further to the above, we are also looking for ideas on what kind of content you, as IAPDM members, would like to see in Disability Management Dialogue, since it is intended to be, by members, for members. Ideas are welcome. Contact: [nidmar@nidmar.ca](mailto:nidmar@nidmar.ca)