



Stay at Work/Return to Work (SAW/RTW) Models and Strategies: Early Intervention Pathway Map and Population Profiles

SUMMARY

In 2017, the Chief Evaluation Office and the Office of Disability Employment Policy partnered with independent contractor Abt Associates to conduct the [Stay at Work/Return to Work \(SAW/RTW\) Models and Strategies Study](#). The study aims to document and expand the knowledge base of SAW/RTW strategies and identify promising models and best practices. The final study also includes evaluation design options, which could be implemented to build on and add to the evidence produced.

SAW/RTW programs intend to help a worker who experiences an illness or injury to remain at work, or if the worker has left the labor force, to return as soon as medically possible. **Stay at Work/Return to Work (SAW/RTW) Models and Strategies: Early Intervention Pathway Map and Population Profiles** analyzes public data to estimate the characteristics of the SAW/RTW target population and examine pathways from illness/injury to federal disability benefits as a way to identify opportunities for intervention.

This Department of Labor-funded study includes four reports and a summary of findings and was a result of the annual learning agenda process. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform employment and training programs and policies and addresses Department strategic goals and priorities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Using the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) to examine the outcomes of people who experience the onset of a work-limiting health condition, researchers found that at 17 to 20 months after onset:
 - **Nearly half are back at work**
 - **About one in five is receiving federal disability benefits**, either Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Payments
 - **About 3 in 10 are neither working nor receiving federal disability benefits.**
- **Health care use is the most common touchpoint for people within the 16 months after they stop working.** About 80 percent of the respondents analyzed use some type of health care services. Other touchpoints include unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, and job training.

[SEE FULL REPORT](#)

TIMEFRAME: 2017-2020
SUBMITTED BY: Abt Associates
DATE PREPARED: October 2020

PARTNER AGENCY: Office of Disability Employment Policy
SPONSOR: DOL Chief Evaluation Office
CEO CONTACT: ChiefEvaluationOffice@dol.gov





Stay at Work/Return to Work (SAW/RTW) Models and Strategies: Early Intervention Pathway Map and Population Profiles

The Department of Labor (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) sponsors independent evaluations and research, primarily conducted by external, third-party contractors in accordance with the [Department of Labor Evaluation Policy](#). CEO's research development process includes extensive technical review at the design, data collection and analysis stage, including: external contractor review and OMB review and approval of data collection methods and instruments per the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), review by academic peers (e.g., Technical Working Groups), and inputs from relevant DOL agency and program officials and CEO technical staff. Final reports undergo an additional independent expert technical review and a review for Section 508 compliance prior to publication. The resulting reports represent findings from this independent research and do not represent DOL positions or policies.

