

Higher Disability Costs as Workforce Ages

Individuals are staying in the workforce longer and employers are dealing with older generations of workers. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has found that as the workforce ages, employers can expect higher disability costs.

For a worker in his or her twenties, falling on an icy sidewalk could result in bruises and a day or two off work however, for an older worker the same event could result in major injuries and significant sick leave.

For employers, that means more time until that worker returns to the job, less productivity and eventually, higher disability costs.

The BLS found that for workers 65 years and older, suffering injuries or illness, the median time off was 15 days. For the most part, such absences would fall under short-term disability however, among older workers the fear of losing their job in this economy, causes them to avoid short-term leave. This in turn keeps workers on the job when they haven't fully recovered from minor injuries that could result in major injuries later on.

The cost concerns for employers are in the area of longer-term disability or disability that lasts anywhere from a year to until the employee reaches retirement age. Social Security Disability Insurance

(SSDI) is a program available to those who have been deemed disabled for at least a year or who have been diagnosed as permanently disabled. Many disabled workers draw from this program to supplement their long-term disability income and as demand on the SSDI is growing, experts say employer-based disability is also expected to grow considerably as the workforce ages.

However, not everyone believes that an increase in disability claims or the stress that's put on SSDI is an issue about aging. Some experts believe that the current population is becoming more susceptible to injuries because of health regardless of age

What This Means For Counties

Since the occurrence of these and other similar incidents, the protection of patient information should be the priority of all counties. All counties may want to look at reinforcing security protocols, implementing new data protection measures and supplementing all of this with training.

For more information, contact CTSI at 303-861-0507.