

The framework of the consensus Based Disability Management Audit™ (CBDMA™) was developed based on a global review of best practices in disability management. The key elements identified as crucial when running effective disability management programs are embodied in the CBDMA™. Through the use of this innovative tool, combined with the services of Certified Return to Work Coordinators™ and Certified Disability Management Professionals™, employers are encouraged and empowered to implement optimum disability management practices at their worksites.

### **Widely Accepted in a Diverse Range of Organizations**

A distinctive and key aspect of the CBDMA™ is the consensus-based process and level of collaboration used during its development. With initial funding for core development provided by Labour Canada, a broad and diverse group of government, business and labour organizations contributed to the creation of this important tool. Initial testing was completed in collaboration with Abitibi-Consolidated, Canadian Forest Products, Weyerhaeuser Company, the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada (IWA), the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP) and the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada (PPWC). Additional testing has involved partnerships with organizations such as Weyerhaeuser Company, the Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia and Correctional Service of Canada, with its participating unions including the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), the Union of Solicitor General Employees (USGE), the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO), and the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPS).

The non-partisan, collaborative, consensus-based approach used to construct and refine the CBDMA™ makes it uniquely suitable and accepted for use by insurance, business, labour and government organizations.

The CBDMA™ allows employers to measure their disability management program performance, providing them with the information they need to ensure workers with disabilities are reintegrated into the workplace in a manner that provides optimum results for all key stakeholders in the disability management process.

**The CBDMA™ Development Process Leads to a Tool With Integrity**

The CBDMA™ has undergone an extensive and rigorous development process. The original framework for the CBDMA™ was developed based on a global review of best practices in disability management, which revealed key elements that are essential when administering successful disability management programs. These elements build on an independently verified and validated process, which defined occupational skills, competencies and abilities for disability management program development and implementation. Both have seen exhaustive scientific, reliable and evidence-based validation at a national and international level.

As noted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in a multi-country study on job retention and return-to-work strategies for workers with disabilities, interdisciplinary disability management teams, facilitated by qualified disability management professionals and practitioners help promote ideal, integrated disability management systems. The need for external disability management standards was identified as an important next step in the evolution of best practices in disability management.

**Reliability and Validity Testing: A Proven Performer in Industry**

The CBDMA™ was developed using a consensus-based model, combining the key elements identified as essential when administering successful disability management programs with feedback from field trials to produce a tool that has not only content validity, but also relevance and utility.

The first major application of the CBDMA™ took place in 1999 in a multi-company, multi-province pulp and paper project in collaboration with Abitibi-Consolidated, Canadian Forest Products, Weyerhaeuser Company, the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada (IWA), the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP) and the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada (PPWC). The financial analyses of the findings were performed by PricewaterhouseCoopers, who, as a result, projected disability costs could rise to \$30.6 billion by 2006 in British Columbia alone, if effective disability management programs were not more widely employed.

Feedback from the first application was used to refine the CBDMA™, preparing it for the first ever wide-scale implementation of a disability management program audit tool in industry, which took place in twenty-six Weyerhaeuser Company British Columbia locations in 2000. The project was completed in partnership with the Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia, Weyerhaeuser Company, the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada (IWA), and with participation of members from the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada (PPWC). All twenty-six Weyerhaeuser British Columbia operating units, representing \$2 billion in revenues and over 5,000 employees, were chosen to participate in the project to provide single jurisdiction data for targeted statistical analyses.

Dr. Ernest Skakun, Director of Psychometrics, Division of Studies in Medical Education at the University of Alberta, and a recognized expert in the field of test design, performed the targeted statistical analysis. Audit scores obtained during this project were compared to location specific workers' compensation, short- and long-term disability data, revealing several compelling results. The most notable results included the tendency for locations with higher audit scores (indicative of higher quality disability management programs) to have:

- Lower workers' compensation, short- or long-term disability claim costs
- Fewer workers' compensation, short- or long-term disability claims

This effect was most notable in relation to two of the CBDMA™ Elements, Element 15 - Transitional Work Options and Element 16 - Workplace Accommodations. In selected cases, this tendency translated into savings of more than \$100,000 in a single year for a single operating location. In addition, the analysis revealed all Elements in the CBDMA™ are relevant to the measurement of good disability management programs.

These noteworthy results and the tool that revealed them were examined by an expert working group including: Dr. E. Skakun; Don Galvin, PhD, former Board of Directors member for the Washington Business Group on Health and former CEO of the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF); Mike Rushby, Weyerhaeuser Company Vice President of Human Resources for Canada; and Dawn Yeager, Director of the Weyerhaeuser Disability Management Global Centre of Excellence.

The success of this project prompted consideration of implementing the CBDMA™ in all Canadian Weyerhaeuser operations. The findings from this project have been presented at national and international conferences, resulting in use of the CBDMA™ in additional industries and settings. It is currently being implemented in fifty Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) institutions, where it continues to provide users with valuable information, as noted by Jim Wladyka, CSC's National Workforce Wellbeing Director:

*"I would like to thank you for the excellent work you are doing for us. The partnership between CSC and NIDMAR has more than met our expectations, and I wish to continue this relationship beyond the conduct of the RTW audits."*

Using feedback gained from both the initial and full implementation projects, a consensus-based panel reviewed and updated the CBDMA™ to measure optimum disability management program performance. Widespread endorsement of the CBDMA™ is resulting in its becoming the standard in definition and measurement of optimum disability management program performance.