



ANNUAL REPORT 2002

# TOWARDS GLOBAL RECOGNITION

**ABOUT THE INSTITUTE :** The National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR), founded in 1994, is an internationally recognized organization committed to reducing the human, social, and economic costs of disability. As an education, training, and research organization, the Institute's primary focus is the implementation of workplace-based integration programs which international research has proven is the most effective way of restoring and maintaining workers' abilities, while reducing costs of disability for workers, employers, government, and insurance carriers. The Institute's success is the result of collaborative initiatives undertaken by leaders in labour, business, government, education, insurance, and rehabilitation. NIDMAR is supported by a broad-based Board of Directors and International Council, with senior representatives from Canada, Australia, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, and the United States. As a long-term labour-management and multi-party organization committed to disability management in the workplace, the National Institute is supported by an endowment fund created through contributions from the federal and provincial governments, major private corporations, and public organizations.

**CONTENTS :**

**04 Management**

04 Wolfgang Zimmermann, Executive Director, NIDMAR  
05 Hon. David Vickers, Chair, International Council

**06 Perspectives**

06 Hartmut Haines  
07 Lex Frieden  
08-09 Hon. Claudette Bradshaw,  
Canadian Minister of Labour

**10 Achievements in 2002**

10-11 Certification standard adopted  
12-13 Certification in Germany  
14-17 First International Forum on Disability Management  
18-19 2nd National Awards of Excellence in Disability Management  
20-21 Plans for next international forums  
22-23 Education

**25 Institute directories**

25-27 Directories & acknowledgements



**TOWARDS GLOBAL RECOGNITION**

*Ours is a brand-new world of all-at-once-ness. 'Time' has ceased, 'space' has vanished.*

*We now live in a global village.*

MARSHALL MCLUHAN  
CANADIAN COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA THEORIST  
FROM, THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 2002



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NIDMAR

**WOLFGANG ZIMMERMANN**

We all know that “ideas” and “concepts” don’t stop at national boundaries. That Canada is one of the leaders in disability management makes me very proud, but this pride is tempered by the knowledge that we can accomplish so much more when we learn from different perspectives and share our own knowledge with others. For these reasons, “towards global recognition” is the theme of this year’s annual report.

One of our key achievements in 2002 was our success in organizing the first international forum on disability management. The forum was a milestone that signals the maturity of disability management. Ten years ago, when DM wasn’t even a recognized field, such an event would have been utterly unthinkable.

Yet in 2002, we were able to bring to Vancouver, Canada, an outstanding group of committed individuals from seven countries as well as representatives from the UN’s International Labour Organization. It was particularly gratifying that the forum provided an opportunity to include a number of educational institutions from Australia, Ireland, the Netherlands, the U.S., and Canada. For the first time in history, the forum provided the opportunity, the time and the depth of expertise to look at disability management initiatives from a variety of perspectives – operational, legislative and research. Credit for the great success of the forum should go to the event’s two co-chairs, Steve Hill and Brian Payne. As well, we are extremely grateful for the support of all our institute partners who committed significant

time and resources, particularly political leadership – Canadian minister of Labour, Claudette Bradshaw, German minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Walter Riester, and the British Columbia Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. Iona Campagnolo whose thoughtful remarks set the stage for the event.

Now we are eagerly anticipating the second International Forum in Amsterdam in 2004, followed by the third in Australia in 2006 and the fourth in Germany in 2008.

As we await these events, we have both good news and bad news to consider. The bad news, as a recent study by the OECD makes clear, is that the hiring rate for persons with disabilities who are on some form of benefit remains very low, despite very high spending on vocational rehabilitation by industrialized nations. Among the good news is the existence of a Code of Practice on *Managing disability in the workplace*, released by the UN’s International Labour Office.

A growing number of business leaders and politicians are recognizing the merits of better disability management. DM is not a passing fad. It is a global strategy that will continue to be developed and further refined.



CHAIR, INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL, NIDMAR

**HON. DAVID VICKERS**

If I had but one piece of advice for anyone engaged in disability management it would be to focus on the individual and not the disability. By so doing you will be able to identify individual strengths upon which to build a successful RTW program. Often a focus on the individual's condition will create a disability. It is a disability created by our own perceptions. A focus on the individual will result in creating an environment that will allow the person to exploit his or her individual strengths.

There are people all around the world who understand this truth – you might even call them soul mates. The genius of NIDMAR has been its ability to connect these people, to bring them together, to share information and ideas and, most important, to share common values. From this shared commitment to the idea of RTW for all persons with a disability, NIDMAR, in a leadership role, developed a certification program in the field of Disability Management.

Another great example of NIDMAR's leadership was this year's International Forum on Disability Management, a truly outstanding event. The fact that so many people came from around the world to share their experiences and reaffirm their common values speaks volumes about the regard with which they hold NIDMAR. While it was interesting to see how different countries approach the principles of RTW; it was even more compelling to realize what everyone had in common: the profound

belief that disability management is beneficial on so many levels – to the affected individual, of course, but also to other workers in the workplace and to the organizations that receive them back to work.

NIDMAR's reach and impact have grown significantly in the past year. Recognizing the need for common standards, the organization has developed a certification program that can be used around the world. The foundation of the program is a commitment to consensus-based disability management programs designed within a local context.

I feel privileged to have been involved with the disability rights movement for more than 30 years, and delighted to have contributed to NIDMAR's work since its inception in 1994. I look forward to my new role as chair of the Regulation and Compliance Commission within the context of the International Disability Management Standards Council and the opportunity to meet others who share these values so fundamental to our work. It will be a learning process for all of us but our task will be made much easier by our shared commitment to the importance of each individual person with a disability and our belief in their ability to return to work.

## PERSPECTIVES



MINISTERIAL DIRECTOR OF DISABILITY,  
GERMAN MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

### HARTMUT HAINES, Ph D

*Hartmut Haines is the Ministerial Director of Disability with the German Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. A true catalyst for disability management in Germany, he has been a member of NIDMAR's International Council since its inception in 1994 and is the winner of an Outstanding Achievement Award from NIDMAR in 2002 for his contribution toward creating the Institute and his long term support to the international promotion of disability management.*

According to Hartmut Haines, there are three key guiding principles to disability management in Germany. The first is the belief that disabled persons ought to be full participants in society. The second is that rehabilitation should begin at the earliest possible opportunity. The third is that rehabilitation cannot be accomplished by a "cookie-cutter" approach, but, instead, must be tailored to the disabled individual's actual needs. Finally, there is an understanding that these three principles must come into play, regardless of the cause of the disability.

To underline the importance of treating each case individually, progressively and as quickly as possible, Haines prefers to use the term "participation management." Most importantly this means addressing the motivation of all involved, from the employer to the disabled person. But it also implies a strong commitment to sharing information with all persons involved; ensuring that the living conditions of the disabled person are appropriate; and, ensuring that public benefits are available.

In every corner of the world, there are obstacles to effective disability management, and Germany is no exception. Haines says that the biggest challenge is raising the public's and the business world's awareness of problems disabled persons have to face. Another challenge is ensuring that the disabled person is recognized as his or her own best advocate and not seen simply as an object for other, so-called "more knowledgeable" people to control.

As Germany continues its path towards advanced disability management, Haines says the country can be proud it has the clear legal structure to support DM as well as broad political support from the public, from disabled persons and from the organizations that represent them. "The tools exist," Haines says, "now, the tools are looking for the artists."

To other countries that are considering the possible merits of committing to disability management – or as he prefers to call it, participation management – Haines says that philosophy can be transported across national boundaries with relative ease. "What differs sometimes, in various societies, are the obstacles at the policy implementation stage," he says. "So, the participation management philosophy can and should be used worldwide while the necessary fields of action may differ."



SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT, INSTITUTE FOR REHABILITATION AND RESEARCH, HOUSTON, TEXAS

## LEX FRIEDEN

*A long time supporter of NIDMAR, Lex Frieden is the senior vice-president for the Institute for Rehabilitation and Research, based in Houston, Texas, and chair of the U.S. Committee on Disability. A passionate believer in the business case for disability management, Frieden argues that employers – and the general public – need to be better educated about the merits of strong back-to-work programs.*

Lex Frieden doesn't mince words. "If employers had to pay more for worker's compensation, they would be more motivated to find ways to get people back into the workforce," he says. Not that he's arguing to raise rates.

But Frieden does believe that when economic forces naturally cause those rates to rise, as they inevitably will, "there is a window of opportunity for advocacy of better DM practices." By the same token, he believes that as the aging baby boomer population starts to retire, resulting in a shortage of skilled workers over the next decade, employers will find the motivation they need to start taking DM more seriously. "Most employers would tell you that they do. But I'm simply not convinced that they're using the most up-to-date practices."

Says Frieden: "In general, I think there is an acknowledgement of the goodness of employing people with disabilities. But I don't believe there is a full knowledge of the degree of benefit to the bottom line that might be achieved through more effective use of best practices.

Frankly, I don't believe the expertise is well enough distributed so that employers have access to the technical assistance they need in order to do that."

Frieden says he's hopeful that efforts such as NIDMAR's certification program will help address that problem. "Even more important is NIDMAR's effort to expand educational opportunities for both employers and consultants working in this area."

In addition to his supportive role with NIDMAR, Frieden is also actively working to establish a UN Convention on the rights of person with disabilities. "We know there are more than 600 million people with disabilities around the world – and that's a very conservative figure," he says. "We know that more than half of those people are living in poverty. Probably 90 percent are unemployed. Most need significant health care.

The only rational approach is to make disabled people part of the solution. We have to move away from care as charity towards a model where everyone can work and be productive. I believe that the process of adopting a UN convention will begin to help change attitudes because the process itself will generate discussion and therefore help inform the public at large."

## PERSPECTIVES



CANADIAN MINISTER OF LABOUR

**HON. CLAUDETTE BRADSHAW**

*The Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Canadian Minister of Labour, has been a leader in the work to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in Canada, as well as a valuable supporter of NIDMAR. A measure of this commitment was her opening address to the First International Forum on Disability Management, held in Vancouver, BC, May 27-29, 2002. Here are some highlights from her speech.*

Just think of the enormous waste of human potential to our economy when persons with disabilities don't get to work! As our economy continues to grow, we cannot afford not to draw on the talents and skills of all of our workers.

Some people become disabled on the job. Work accidents cost the Canadian economy about \$10 billion dollars a year in direct and indirect costs.

About fifteen and a half million days of work were lost this way in 1998. During the same period, time off due to occupational injury or illness increased by 30 percent. As a result, many workers never returned to the workforce. They became dependent on disability pensions or social assistance.

In a Canadian workforce of 15 million people, there are more than one million skilled Canadians who have some kind of disability.

Despite the number of skilled Canadians with disabilities, evidence suggests they have experienced the least progress when it comes to representation, recruitment and promotion.

In 2000, the representation of persons with disabilities by federally regulated private sector employers was 2.3 percent, while they accounted for only 1 percent of all new hires and two percent of all promotions.

These levels are much lower than the pool of available skilled workers with disabilities, estimated at between seven percent and nine percent of the Canadian workforce. Of course, these figures do not take into account the pain and suffering of workers with disabilities and their families.

Effective integration and re-integration strategies and disability management programs are the key. That's why the work that NIDMAR has done, in partnership with the Labour Program, is so important.

NIDMAR laid the groundwork to develop the first ILO Code of Practice on *Managing disability in the workplace*. The Code of Practice ensures that workers with disabilities receive fair and equitable treatment in the workplace. It does this by providing practical guidelines to employers, to unions, to the disability community and to insurers.

We were pleased to have been able to provide funding for this initiative through the Government of Canada's Labour Management Partnerships Program. By having a Code of Practice, we are raising the bar and taking the work we do to a higher level.

I am also confident that this Code, in conjunction with Canada's Employment Equity Act, will contribute to higher participation and improved employment for people with disabilities.

Our challenge now is to convert words into concrete action. We all know that the best framework won't do a thing unless employers and unions across Canada adopt the Code's principles and take action. We cannot rest until we reduce the high social and economic costs of disabilities to workers, employers and society.

I like the model that I see represented by NIDMAR and the ILO Code of Practice. I can sum it up in one word: partnership. It is employers, unions, community groups and governments working together in partnership to find solutions for persons with disabilities.

Employment equity makes good business sense. Across the country, companies are starting to discover the tremendous advantages that can be gained by tapping into Canada's diverse workforce. They understand that success in the global economy depends on using the

natural advantages and the broad range of diversity and skills that exist in our population.

By being inclusive, they have discovered that expanding their pool of qualified applicants and eliminating unfair barriers to employment makes for a workplace that is both more productive and more competitive.

In short, workers with disabilities represent an important source of skills and knowledge that we cannot afford to lose or ignore.

We need to reinvent the role of today's workplaces to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities who are on long-term leave from their jobs. Persons with learning and psychiatric disabilities also need supportive environments because they have a valuable contribution to make to business and to our economy.

We are now at a point where together we must advance our vision of a more inclusive society. A society where more than one million Canadians with disabilities can share equally in the benefits of our country's high standard of living. We must advance our vision of a society in which no adult is marginalized and nobody is left behind.

## CERTIFICATION STANDARD ADOPTED



### CERTIFICATION

If you visit a doctor or an accountant, or use the services of an engineer anywhere in the developed world, you do so with the assurance that he or she is knowledgeable, properly trained and able to do the job with a certain specified degree of skill.

Now, that same type of assurance is available to any organization wanting to hire a return to work coordinator or a disability management professional.

Starting in 2001, NIDMAR began the difficult process of creating defensible examinations that would allow candidates to become “certified” for these important roles.

Supported by government and a broad cross-section of leading Canadian employers, unions, workers compensation boards, private insurance and service providers, the highly technical task of creating the necessary exams was performed by one of Canada’s most reputable test development agencies, Assessment Strategies Inc. of Ottawa.

Candidates who successfully pass these exams will obtain either a CRTWC™ or CDMP™ designation.

Senior representatives from Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia and the United States have, together, created the International Disability Management Standards Council™ (IDMSC™) which, through its Certification Commission, will be responsible for awarding and maintaining the designation marks

and Occupational Standards to ensure their continued commitment to excellence.

The Certification Commission, which reports to the IDMSC™ is the body which directly oversees the certification process of the two designated professional groups. Additionally, each jurisdiction operates with a national certification council entrusted with applying the International Standards to the unique national, cultural, legislative and socio-economic environment while maintaining consistent quality assurance, psychometric and content standards.

Employers will be assured that individuals holding the certification are thoroughly trained and have met designated standards of excellence. As well, a public registry of certified individuals will link like-minded disability management practitioners and professionals, enhance national and international networking opportunities, and create an excellent basis for advancing a cutting-edge agenda in disability management research.

#### WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT CERTIFICATION

*“The institute was formed by large, influential and concerned constituencies – government, employees, employers and insurance providers. NIDMAR was given the mandate to capture the thinking and the practices of disability management in Canada, and to put together a process and a tool that would have that kind of perspective.*”

*“Even though we’re designing an exam that’s Canadian, it has to capture principles that are universal. The core must reflect the common elements and principles.”*

SHARON BRINTNELL  
CHAIR OF THE CERTIFICATION COMMISSION, AND  
PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY  
DIRECTOR, OCCUPATIONAL PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS UNIT  
FACULTY OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE  
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA, EDMONTON, ALBERTA

*“Return to work is one of the key focuses for my organization. We often struggle because we don’t have people who have any qualifications or understanding of return to work programs in the employer community, especially with mid-size and smaller employers.*

*NIDMAR in other countries will give disability management practitioners and professionals recognized credentials that will make their careers portable.*

*NIDMAR deserves great praise for having taken the initiative to make this happen. It’s been a hard struggle over time with a lot of people who were skeptical about it. To see it get launched – and launched internationally – is a major accomplishment. NIDMAR deserves kudos.”*

RALPH MCGINN  
PRESIDENT AND CEO  
WORKERS COMPENSATION BOARD OF BC, AND  
PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATION OF WORKERS COMPENSATION  
BOARDS OF CANADA

*“I think the major value is the fact that it will give employers the opportunity to understand that the individuals they’re hiring have the base level of skills, ability and knowledge to do the job.*

*When you’re in a job interview and everyone knows you’ve passed the standard and mastered the core competencies to be a disability management professional, it lends you huge credibility.*

*For employers, once it’s well known, it will drive some hiring decisions. It’s going to provide employers with the confidence that the people they’re hiring are going to do the job well, and properly manage the complexities of returning people to work. It has significant positive financial and human impact.*

*The overall impact on the lives of disabled workers will be tremendous because you’ll have professionals who are qualified and know the strategies to bring these people back to work.”*

LIZ SCOTT, PhD  
PRINCIPAL, ORGANIZATIONAL SOLUTIONS  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

*“If there’s a social commitment to rehabilitating people and returning them to work, what the certification does is help employers make an informed choice about the qualifications of the person they want to lead them in that process.*

*We hope that this will be a credential on a person’s resume that employers will look to, in the same way that if you want work done on your house, you look for a tradesperson with papers.*

*The credential and code of practice are components of an overall approach to the fundamental issues that emphasize the consensus of all involved, and make disability management more humane and better for everyone in the long run.*

*It’s been a long road for NIDMAR, and it’s a step forward to the organization because now it has identified the training and experience needed, and it’s providing a vehicle for organizations to make choices about practitioners.”*

ANDREW KING  
NATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT CO-ORDINATOR  
UNITED STEELWORKERS OF AMERICA - CANADIAN NATIONAL OFFICE  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

*“The thing that strikes me most about this accomplishment is that it raises the bar quite significantly in a discipline that is very important. It encourages the kind of dedication, knowledge and commitment from people that will balance the human aspect with the economic aspect that keeps industry strong. With government, industry and labour support, NIDMAR has been a real beacon on the horizon, setting out a vision of things that can be accomplished, then developing practical, effective tools for achieving them.”*

BOB BUCHER  
FORMER PRESIDENT AND CEO (NOW RETIRED)  
PACIFIC BLUE CROSS, VANCOUVER, BC

## CERTIFICATION IN GERMANY



DIRECTOR GENERAL, GERMAN FEDERATION OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARDS

**JOACHIM BREUER, PhD**

Knowledge and expertise shouldn't be stopped at national borders. And that philosophy – of sharing information and building consensus around the world – has been NIDMAR's practice since its very beginnings. Now, with the tools for international certification in place, the field of disability management can rise to another level.

This is particularly apparent in Germany, which has embraced DM in both the public sphere and the private sector.

For example, the NIDMAR designation has this year been licensed by the German Federation of Workers' Compensation Boards (known in Germany as the HVBG), covering 43 million workers.

The group's Director General, Joachim Breuer, says that he is a passionate believer in the importance of effective disability management, and of international standards.

"We've been working in Germany on disability management for more than 100 years," he said. "We're working at a very high level, but this system can help improve this. It's the first time for the Germans that we have an accepted quality standard. It gives us the chance to find out: 'are we really as good as we think we are?'"

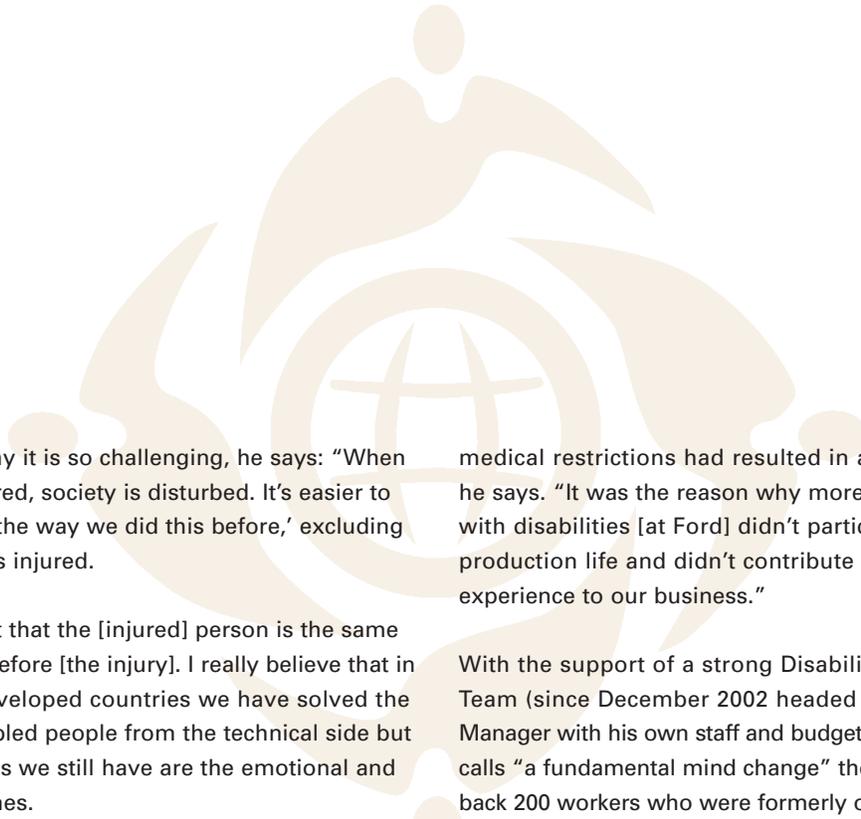
Breuer, who has worked personally in the field of DM for 13 years, says that his commitment to DM is underpinned by two key factors – the human and the financial.

Referring to the former, he describes the moment at which a worker is injured or incapacitated. "Everything changes. It's very hard for people. You have problems with many aspects of your life. If you lose your workplace, on top of that, it has a large impact on your well being. But if we can help reintegrate disabled people into the workplace, they feel better. This is the human factor."

Looking at the financial side, Breuer is also a strong advocate of the cost effectiveness of DM. "Many people believe that it costs you a lot of money if you want to get a worker back to work. They forget there is an economic benefit to getting the person back to work. These individuals have expertise that is otherwise lost. I believe DM is a positive economic factor for society in general."

Breuer's vision sees the certification standard being introduced across Europe. "In the European market, there are 25 completely different economies – it's a very wide range," he says. "Social security is one of the key factors in any economy and DM is one of the key factors for social security. There's the possibility to spread this new thinking on an international level. Germany would be the first base in Europe. We need a lot more countries to have a truly international standard. It would be a great success to grow by four or five countries each year."

Still, he recognizes the magnitude of the challenge ahead. "About 50 percent of businesses haven't realized that disability management has human and economic factors," he says. "We're still working to convince them."



Reflecting on why it is so challenging, he says: "When someone is injured, society is disturbed. It's easier to say, 'let's go on the way we did this before,' excluding the one who was injured.

"We often forget that the [injured] person is the same person he was before [the injury]. I really believe that in the so-called developed countries we have solved the problem of disabled people from the technical side but the real problems we still have are the emotional and psychological ones.

"Society needs to realize that the world doesn't run every day in a perfect sense. It's worth remembering that the connection between people is not always perfect. It's ongoing and permanent work to convince people that disabled workers shouldn't be viewed as something that disturbs our perfectly run world.

"Disability management is not like building an airport – it's not a project that is ever finished. We have to convince society that you can never stop advocating it."

**FORD SETS NEW STANDARD** Erich Knuelle, a medical doctor and an Occupational Health Specialist with the Ford Motor Company in Cologne, Germany says his vision for DM has arisen out of first-hand experience with disabled workers. "A 'deficit model' in terms of

medical restrictions had resulted in a discrimination," he says. "It was the reason why more than 200 people with disabilities [at Ford] didn't participate in normal production life and didn't contribute their skills and experience to our business."

With the support of a strong Disability Management Team (since December 2002 headed by a Disability Manager with his own staff and budget) and what Knuelle calls "a fundamental mind change" the company brought back 200 workers who were formerly on disability. "Now 'Disability Management by Ability Management' is the sign and slogan of the paradigm shift," Knuelle says.

For anyone who doubts the merits of an active DM program, Knuelle says: "It is part of an obligation to guarantee human rights." But he also refers to the financial benefits: "It's a win-win situation for the employer who can retain employees who are knowledgeable and experienced. He adds: "The third winner is national economy, because a recipient of benefit will be transferred by DM to a premium payer."

Knuelle is happy that the NIDMAR designation has been licensed by the HVBG. "It's the right decision at the right time," he says. "It opens the field to install the Code of Practice as the right instrument to tear down barriers and to destroy discrimination."

## INTERNATIONAL FORUM 27-29 MAY 2002 VANCOUVER



**INTERNATIONAL FORUM** When more than 400 delegates streamed into Vancouver, BC, for the first ever International Forum on Disability Management, May 27 to 29, NIDMAR knew it had a monumental achievement on its hands.

After all, a mere 10 years ago, NIDMAR didn't even exist and Disability Management was scarcely an articulated concept.

Now, a forum on DM had attracted participants from 10 countries – senior business and union leaders, respected academics and government representatives – to attend seven plenary sessions and choose between 24 separate workshops on disability management.

"As someone who was a co-founder of the institute, it made me feel really good to know that the initiative we'd started almost a decade ago in Port Alberni, BC, had grown to the point that we were hosting an international conference attracting the best minds in the world," says Brian Payne, labour co-chair for the forum and president of the CEP Union of Canada.

"It was very positive – a great gathering," says Steve Hill, employer co-chair for the forum and senior vice-president, Human Resources, for the U.S.-based forestry company Weyerhaeuser. "I was really pleased with the number of people from different places – different countries and different organizations – ranging

from public to private and including both unions and employers. I think it was a great open dialogue."

For Brian Payne, the forum symbolized just how far NIDMAR has come. "As I was giving my opening remarks," he says, "I thought to myself, it seemed like only yesterday we were talking about what might be possible to achieve. The forum exemplified the progress we have made. We're really on the road to making a difference for injured and disabled workers. It gave me a feeling of satisfaction about what we've actually achieved, and a sense of optimism for the future."

For Steve Hill, the forum provided a "shot in the arm" and a chance to be inspired. "Everybody got the chance to get re-energized about disability management and to learn from each other about the new thinking and innovation in DM that's going on," he said. "The highlight of the event for me was, Alvin Law, a man who was born without arms and who spoke at the awards banquet. It was very inspirational to see someone with that kind of disability take control of his life and his own destiny. I think the messages he delivered to the group were very powerful."

For Don Galvin, former director of the Washington Business Group on Health and a member of the forum's steering committee, the highlight was the unveiling of the International Labour Organization's Code of Practice on *Managing disability in the workplace*. "The opening



of the forum was quite a ceremony and it set a very high tone," he says.

Galvin was also impressed to hear reports from American firms abroad, such as General Electric and Ford. "The accomplishments of their European affiliates were most impressive," he said. "They have much to teach their US home offices."

Like others, he also heard some distressing statistics about the low rates of employment of the disabled. "This is particularly urgent, if not pandemic, in Western Europe," he says. "Their social schemes tend to discourage retention on the job, at a very high cost to the government. They're really suffering on the productivity side because of so much absence."

As for the accomplishment of the forum, he says: "The success is really proven by the fact that it's going to be repeated."

*"NIDMAR is very effective in raising awareness and improving the skills of disability management practitioners and professionals. As Minister of Labour I firmly believe in the consultative process and the business-labour partnerships that are essential for today's workplace. I am pleased that NIDMAR also has strong business-labour partnerships and I think this is essential to bring about any lasting change in the workplace."*

HON. CLAUDETTE BRADSHAW  
CANADIAN MINISTER OF LABOUR

**FORUM RICH IN CHOICE:** When delegates attended the first forum, they could choose between 24 workshops. Here is a snapshot of the wide range of choices they had:

**Mental health factors and return to work** — Workshop examined the mental health factors that must be considered when developing appropriate interventions and accommodations, as well as the implications of strategies for return to work. (With William Gnam, MD, research scientist & psychiatrist, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health and Adjunct scientist, The Institute for Work & Health, Canada.)

**Shortening the rehabilitation process by networking medical and occupational rehabilitation** — Focused on curtailing problems between medical and occupational rehabilitation through reintegration by any means appropriate, with a view to innovative measures at the earliest time possible. (With Detlev Griese, PhD, Construction Workers' Compensation Board, Germany.)

**Psychosocial predictors of success in RTW for people with disabilities** — Reviewed the findings from research that was intended to design and evaluate models of an early intervention program (With Madan Kundu, PhD, Professor/Coordinator Southern University, Rehab Counseling & Services, Dept. of Psychology, USA.)

**The development of DM in the construction industry** — Presented the results of a study of construction companies and of their work-injury prevention strategies, including a cost-benefit analysis, showing that out of every 1 Euro invested, 5 Euros were gained for the company. (With Frans Nijhuis, PhD, University of Maastricht, The Netherlands.)

## INTERNATIONAL FORUM 27-29 MAY 2002 VANCOUVER


**Hans Schmidt**  
**Switzerland**

"In my country, we are only at the very beginning of developing disability management programs, so we cannot rely on local experiences. That's why it's essential for me to contact more experienced stakeholders. As a newcomer it was great to be able to get in touch with more experienced researchers, entrepreneurs and providers at a very well organized conference. I am now certain we will be able to implement case-management projects in the workplace in Switzerland. I know if I need help, I can get it from the international community."

*Hans Schmidt is a plaintiff lawyer based in Zurich specializing in return to work issues for injured workers.*

**Donal McAnaney**  
**Ireland**

"It was a most impressive affair, well organized and well structured. The enthusiasm of those participating was palpable. The range and variety of backgrounds and perspectives represented in the speakers and the audience gave a truly cross-disciplinary, multi-sectoral tone to the whole proceedings. The event was an important milestone in the establishment of consensus-based DM as the approach of choice across a range of jurisdictions. The most memorable moment for me was a conversation I had with two representatives from the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. It was intriguing to realize that trade unions could play such a proactive role in promoting DM. This

was an insight into Canadian culture that I had not experienced before. The forum placed the issue of DM firmly on the international agenda of a number of countries."

*Donal McAnaney, PhD is the Director of Research and Innovation, Rehab Group, Ireland and is Program Director of Rehabilitation Studies, University College of Dublin.*

**Brigitte van Lierop**  
**Netherlands**

"I think it was a very strong forum. We gained real insight into the latest developments in rules and regulations, practical methods, success factors and new research about Disability Management, all in an international setting. The highlight of the event was the evening of the awards presentations, demonstrating how many people are working hard to improve the work situations of persons with disabilities."

*Brigitte van Lierop, PhD is Program Director of Vocational Rehabilitation of the iRv Institute for Rehabilitation Research in Hoensbroek, while continuing her research activities at Maastricht University.*

**Nicholas Buys**  
**Australia**

"The forum was inspirational. To see the range of countries and stakeholders coming together in one place was a fabulous example of what can be achieved when there is a commitment to an ideal – that people with injuries cannot be left on the "scrap heap" but



must be assisted through a joint labour-management approach to return to work and re-establish their lives.

For me, there were two highlights to the event – first, the presentations by various ministers which revealed the depth of commitment of governments to the issue of implementing DM, and, second, the awards presentation, which showcased real-life examples of people and organizations putting the principles of DM into practice. The forum was a wonderful example of what can be achieved when you bring employers, government representatives, service providers and researchers together.”

*Nicholas Buys, PhD is an Associate Professor at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. He is also Director of the Centre for Human Services, which conducts research into tertiary rehabilitation.*

**Friedrich Mehrhoff  
Germany**

“About 25 percent of the participants came from the employers’ side – I think that was excellent! Insiders know how difficult it is to persuade employers about the benefit of disability management and, in addition to that, to motivate them to take part in a conference for more than one day. For me, a highlight was the constructive discussion between employers and disabled people represented by high-level delegates – under the alert ears of government representatives. The German minister of Labour and Social Affairs was not the only one who left Vancouver being convinced of the importance of Disability Management! For the next forum, I suggest trying to involve more health care

providers (physicians). Their interests and competence in maintaining or making people healthy and workable would help accomplish the goals of the institute.”

*Friedrich Mehrhoff, PhD is director of the department dealing with disability management within the federal association of the German insurers against work accidents and occupational diseases.*

**Blake Williams  
Canada**

“It was an impressive collection of world experts sharing their expertise and insights for solutions to the global problem of high unemployment for persons with disabilities. The workshops and the national awards ceremony complemented each other exceptionally well, allowing theory to meet award-winning practices. For me, the highlight was the welcoming speech by B.C.’s Lieutenant Governor, Iona Campagnolo. She emphasized the social importance of effective disability management, praised NIDMAR’s positive impact (provincially, nationally and internationally), and committed her personal support to furthering advancements for persons with disabilities. The forum set one of the first significant benchmarks for conferences of this kind by allowing different jurisdictions to share their DM challenges and their visions for improvement. The forum’s success provides a solid base from which the 2004 forum in the Netherlands, the 2006 forum in Australia and the 2008 forum in Germany can proceed.”

*Blake Williams is the Director of the Workers Advisers Office of the British Columbia Ministry of Skills Development and Labour.*

## 2nd National Awards of Excellence in Disability Management

Described by many as a “highlight” of the International Forum, the 2nd National Awards of Excellence in Disability Management provided an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of DM and RTW practitioners and recognize outstanding programs. With TV personality Gloria Macarenko as Master of Ceremonies, and a host of winners coming to the platform to accept their awards, guests heard many stories about the challenges and rewards of effective disability management.

### Small organization/ workplace award

### Large private organization/ workplace award

### Crown corporation/ government agency award *(tie)*



Chemainus Sawmill Unit,  
Weyerhaeuser, Chemainus, BC

From left: Hank Busscher, MC  
Gloria Macarenko, Kathy Dilalla,  
Gary Munro, National Awards chair  
David Vickers

J. D. Irving, Limited,  
Saint John, NB

L to R: Medical director Tim Kelly,  
Health Service consultant Lynn  
Irving, Disability manager Martha  
Smith, Disability manager Mary  
Martell

Health Care Corporation of St.  
John's, NL

From left: Nurse and Lab  
Nurses Union representative  
Karen Carroll and Manager of  
Employee Wellness Maureen  
Meaney

Ontario Power Generation,  
Toronto, ON

From left: Wellness and  
Benefits Division director  
Diane Westcott and Wellness  
program manager Katrina  
McArthur

**Public service initiative award**

**Return to work coordinator/disability management professional award**  
*(four-way tie)*

**Outstanding public leadership award**



Workers' Compensation Board of Northwest Territories & Nunavut.  
Donna Allen, Vice-President, NWT Operations

Marg Creen, DM consultant, Manulife, Toronto, ON Shown with MC Gloria Macarenko (left) and National Awards chair David Vickers (right)

Dave Pearce, IWA-Canada, Canfor, Fort St. John, BC

Trudy Langthorne, Canfor, Prince George Pulp & Paper, BC

David Moorhouse, Council of Trade Unions, BC Rail, Vancouver, BC

University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, BC L to r: Henry Harder and Robin Fisher

## INTERNATIONAL FORUM 13-15 SEPT 2004 AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS



## INTERNATIONAL FORUM

AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS, 2004

**THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON DISABILITY MANAGEMENT** is planned for Sept. 14 and 15, 2004, in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The two-day conference will be preceded by a one-day excursion to visit several companies and organizations on Sept. 13.

Frank Pot, PhD director of TNO Work and Employment, one of the sponsors of the event, said organizers hope that a wide variety of human resource professionals attend the forum, including employers, employees, researchers, occupational healthcare professionals, lobby groups and policy makers.

Although there will be something for everyone, the most important target group of the conference will be companies (including managers, staff professionals and supervisors), as the main focus of the conference will be disability management in a corporate setting. Organizers stress the emphasis will be on practices and opportunities rather than obstacles and problems.

"With the second International Forum, we hope to achieve the dissemination of DM principles, build networks, exchange experiences from the workplace and involve employers in further development of DM principles and practices," Pot said. "We will offer knowledge, strategies to improve human resource management, an international network and the opportunity to learn from the practice of trend-setting companies."

A restricted number of plenaries will take place during the first part of each of the morning sessions while 26 highly interactive workshops will be offered in the late morning and during the afternoons. The workshops will

be organized in four parallel sessions – two sessions on the Tuesday and two on the Wednesday. Some workshops will be offered several times. Participants will have the ability to choose the ones in which they are most interested.

On the last day, one or two workshops will not be scheduled beforehand. This will allow for the possibility of a spontaneous and informal workshop (or, perhaps, a repeat offer of a previously held workshop that had been popular or overbooked).

Within each workshop, organizers have planned for the presentation portion to take no more than half of the allotted time, with the rest of the time reserved for questions, comments and other interaction with participants. As a result, workshop presenters will not be considered "speakers" so much as "facilitators" or "activators". Generally speaking, workshops will be limited to two facilitators, to encourage more participation.

Organizers say the major goal of the workshops is to: "exchange experiences, demonstrate benefits, discuss results, suggest new ways, give eye openers, and use brainstorming to go deeply into the subject and to learn from each other." The results of the workshops will be documented and distributed at the conclusion of the forum.

Up to 400 people will be able to participate, with no more than 200 from the Netherlands. The language of the conference will be English. By June 2003, information should be available at the forum website [www.ifdm.nl](http://www.ifdm.nl).

## INTERNATIONAL FORUM 2006 AUSTRALIA



## INTERNATIONAL FORUM

AUSTRALIA, 2006

**THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON DISABILITY MANAGEMENT** When the third International Forum on Disability Management takes place in Australia, in 2006, it will have an experienced leader at the helm. Graham Hughes, a long time member of NIDMAR's International Council, has a background in the insurance industry stretching back more than 40 years, with over 20 of those years at senior executive levels specifically involved in workers' compensation and auto accident personal injury insurance.

"My experience has led me to understand and appreciate that personal injury insurance should be more than a simple compensation system," he says.

In 1989, Hughes was responsible for introducing Workplace Rehabilitation Programs into the Queensland Workers' Compensation system and, in 1994, as Insurance Commissioner, he oversaw the drafting and introduction of auto accident insurance legislation, specifically providing for rehabilitation obligations on participating insurers.

He says that his association with NIDMAR has strengthened his belief in the value of disability management. "Return-to-work strategies must provide meaningful social and economic benefits to individuals, organizations and the community," he says.

A firm believer in the importance of research, Hughes describes it as "an essential activity." He says: "It's of particular significance in the field of disability management where the limited funding base and the vulnerability of the client group demands an evidence-based approach."

He adds: "Anecdotal evidence is no longer an acceptable basis for decision-making in health care or disability management. Evidence must come from rigorous quantitative and qualitative research."

As planning begins on the 2006 forum, Hughes looks to the model of the 2002 forum for inspiration. "It provided a showcase for the theory and practice of disability management and return-to-work strategies," he says. He was particularly impressed with the way the forum was successful in conveying the DM message to government officials.

"Bringing together an international group of governmental figures – of a significant political and bureaucratic level – with the understanding that the activity was to progress and be reported, biennially, on the international stage, was an outstanding achievement," he says.

When the 3rd International Forum opens in Australia, Hughes hopes it will be a landmark event both for Australia – and for the rest of the world.

"It will reinforce the commitment to achieving more successful social and economic outcomes for the severely injured in Australia," he says. "It will also expose Australians to a wide range of DM disciplines and allow them to meet some international champions of the severely injured.

"Third, and most importantly, the forum will allow Australia to make its contribution to the ongoing advancement of those suffering severe injury around the world."

## EDUCATION



CURRICULUM CONSULTANT

**HEATHER PERSONS**

It's probably not surprising that, in this age of the computer, one of our most popular training initiatives has proven to be online instruction.

What's surprising is how quickly it has taken off. What began as a pilot project in just 2001 now offers a range of learning modules that can be "mixed and matched" allowing participants to build a program tailored precisely to their own needs and priorities.

In addition to offering convenience and flexibility, upon completion of the full set of 25 modules, the participant receives a certificate of completion. The education program is one of a number of programs available to equip participants to sit the IDMSC certification exam.

Curriculum consultant Heather Persons, who coordinates the program, says that participants particularly like the opportunity to interact with their peers. "It gives them the chance to exchange ideas with people in the same field, although in different areas of the country and in different types of organizations."

The program is delivered with internet-based software. Participants are given the manual, readings and other resources on the Friday before the module begins. On Sunday night, a first set of "scenarios" – which are analyzed via online discussion during the week – is delivered. A second set is provided on Wednesday evening and the discussion continues. By the following Sunday, participants must submit an assignment. Throughout the week, they can log onto a discussion board at any time

to "talk" to their instructor and classmates (most class sizes are 15-20 people). "We have some people on graveyard shift who do it in the middle of the night," Persons says.

That sort of flexibility is a big plus for a student like Jamie Chordis, who works with Advantage Rehabilitation Consultants in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, and who has taken a number of online modules. "I could log on at any time, and didn't have to be there at any specific time – it was great," she says.

"Learning online was new to me, so I didn't know what to expect," she adds. "It was very user-friendly though, and the material itself was really good."

Instructor Patti Coates says that while online teaching presents its challenges, it also has its benefits, too.

"The biggest advantage to teaching an online course is that I have access to that medium 24 hours a day," she says. "And the really beautiful part of that is I can go in and respond to a student's question right away."

As for the future, Heather Persons says that we are constantly updating the program materials as well as adding more media such as audio and video clips. Persons is working with content experts to develop some advanced workshops for those who have already completed the program. "We've had interest expressed in ergonomics and in developing a business case for disability management," she says.

**WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING** *"This training focuses on consensus-based disability management. It sends the message that individuals have gone through a process that not only includes testing, but that also includes a level of experience. What also goes along with it are ethical standards that practitioners need to adhere to. That's a first in the field of disability management, and I think it fills a vacuum in that field right now. It gives employers and unions another level of confidence that the individuals not only know what it takes to do the job, but they subscribe to an ethical framework."*

MIKE CARLETON  
VICE-CHAIR, WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEAL TRIBUNAL,  
BRITISH COLUMBIA MINISTRY OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND LABOUR

*"The curriculum from NIDMAR is well designed. It's easy to take it from Canada to Germany, because there is one structure through all modules. It's very useful to get lesson plans and scripts and links and so on. I'm glad we didn't have to do this from scratch. In German you say 'man braucht das Rad nicht zweimal zu erfinden' – you don't want to re-invent the wheel. Just last month, when I was searching for employees, I ran into the same problem: many of them weren't properly educated to be return to work coordinators. Traditionally, they've had to learn by doing. I don't think it is the right way.*

*I'd like to see a good pool of trained return to work coordinators in Germany, because I believe good training is essential and because I think it's the only way to save money."*

ANGELA KAEMMERLING  
IUVIS, GERMANY

*"I have three main goals in my online instruction. My number one goal is to feel confident that those students are leaving with the required knowledge. As well, I make sure I've identified and told any students that need more instruction in certain areas. My third goal is to keep the students from drifting away. To do that, I try to stay in contact with every student. If I haven't heard from a student in a day or so, I'll send them an email just to touch base. I do have one other goal: to have fun and learn something myself!"*

PATTI COATES  
PROGRAM MANAGER FOR MOHAWK COLLEGE'S  
RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM, ONTARIO  
INSTRUCTOR IN THE ONLINE RETURN TO WORK  
COORDINATOR PROGRAM

*"I've found the training useful in my work in many ways. The courses are very practical; I really feel I've gained useful practical information from each and every course. As an example, recently the course on assistive devices helped me to expand the way I look at the employer's ability to provide accommodation and be more creative at problem solving. A previous course on diversity helped me to consider how workers are being treated by their co-workers for ethnic reasons or reasons related to their disability."*

ANN MCKNIGHT DURALIA  
COUNTY OF OXFORD WODINGFORD LODGE, ONTARIO

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