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RespectAbility
Best Practices in Action – VR and Business Partnerships in Iowa

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>> Good afternoon and welcome to the RespectAbility webinar for July 11th, 2016. My name is Philip Pauli, the policy and practices director for RespectAbility, and I am absolutely delighted to be here with you today. And we are talking about Iowa for the second time. Specifically we're talking about the great work that David Mitchell, the director of the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services has been doing, particularly around employer engagement, and one of the reasons why we're highlighting Iowa is they are doing some really innovative work around what they call rehoming aging workers. They have some really wonderful partnerships with the UnityPoint Health System in Des Moines, and we are delighted today to be joined by Michelle Krefft and Emily Brown. We are talking about talking the work that Iowa is doing, what they are doing around aging workers, how to engage employers. As you may have seen from the chat box, we will be showing two videos today during the webinar. For those on the phone, please turn on computer speakers when the video place. We going to learn a lot today. Thank you general for joining us. As ever, we deeply appreciate the

contribution of JPMorgan Chase which has made this free webinar series possible. Take it away, David.

>> Thank you very much, Philip and Jennifer, Virginia, who helped us get all of this set up. We appreciate all of the support. I think RespectAbility has done a great job in bringing some of these issues to the forefront to take a look at across the country how do we increase visibility for individuals with disabilities and strategies to engage individuals into competitive community integrated employment. This is an important topic, especially as we look at the regulations that have just come out with the workforce integrations opportunities act. Specifically in Iowa how do we work with employers to identify integrated employment, and how that expands into opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services, and specifically with transition services for youth. So we are very excited about being able to share a little bit today about what we do and how we do it.

I think part of our focus is really is how do we look at any service delivery we do to make sure we relate how it creates a value to our business customers, and we certainly do not do that alone here in Iowa. We have some great partnerships, and our VR staff and our community providers do a great job and -- in bringing that to action. To give you a couple of examples of those partnerships, we have a third-party contract with our Iowa Department of Aging Partners, and we, through that contract, leverage dollars

through the department of aging to help the VR agency with federal match, and we have hired six employment specialists who work across the state, specifically working with individuals that are 55 years of age or older that have disabilities. Those business specialists are engaged with that population as well as with our business customers to look at how do we create a bridge and link to those businesses, specifically for that population.

We also have a very unique relationship with our partners at our Developmental Disabilities Council. They have done a great job looking at how do we partner and move employment first efforts forward, so in Iowa we have talked about employment first and how everybody can work with the right supports. And a good example of that is with our developmental disabilities council, they have what they call the ID action video series, and it's a series of videos that are focused on individuals with significant disabilities talking about the importance of work to them and what services have helped them look at competitive employment. And you get to actually hear the stories from them. And so that actually gave us some ideas of how to use videos more effectively, and we are going to share a couple of those videos today that I hope you'll be able to get to. In case they don't work at your specific computer workstation, we'll provide links for you to look at them after the presentation.

What's important as we talk about business engagement is the relationships, and it really is all about connections. And we have two individuals that will be able to go into a little bit more detail about their role in business engagement. One of those is Michelle Krefft, our business consultant. She had been a vocational rehabilitation counselor up in northern Iowa, and her outcomes were astonishing. We would go would get double the outcomes of any of our other staff, so we are talking 60 to 80 employment outcomes every year for a number of years, and as we talked to Michelle about what he did and how she did -- what she did and how she did it, it came down to employment connections and how it translated into being a better vocational counseling. She's now working as a statewide business consultant, and in the last year that she has been working, we have come up with several I think pretty innovative practices that utilize our business partners in ways to help share with staff the importance of a dual customer role, and she'll talk a little bit about that.

We also have one of our business partners here, Emily Brown. And Emily, we were laughing before we came on live. Emily just spent this last weekend doing some demonstration projects with the Iowa Army National Guard and it was part of the guard's outreach efforts to partner with local businesses, so Emily got to spend the weekend doing obstacle course challenges, riding in a Blackhawk helicopter,

practicing maneuvers up in the sky, so this will be a piece of cake coming into a webinar where she doesn't have to get airborne sickness. I think she's excited to have both feet on the ground to talk to us. She came to us in a unique way in that she has a rehabilitation counseling background, had worked with community services in providing services and got connected with UnityPoint which is one of our major health care providers in the state doing some work under a grant covered project. And as we looked at how to sustain Emily's position and make it a value to the business, we recognize that wouldn't it be cool if vocational rehabilitation could embed staff in a valuable way to business?

Now, Emily has kind of taken her position, and we are still contracting with UnityPoint, but Emily is part of the human resources department at UnityPoint, and they have been very proactive and innovative in how they work with individuals with barriers, and Emily will share a little bit about that. How that ties in to our vocational rehabilitation division is we are envisioning as time goes on and we move into virtual offices. In the next five to ten years, as we look at VR staff, how can we be out in the community, mobile, integrated into business, and how do we help businesses look at how to retain value -- how do we help them to look at diversifying their workforce with individuals with talents that meet their needs. Emily will share some examples of that.

This slide just talks a little bit about our partnership with the Kwik Trip Stores and the Kwik Star, and you'll hear specifically about what they are doing to help move Iowa employment further, UnityPoint Health System, Manpower, we have a special partner through our state rehabilitation counsel with Manpower, staffing, with their access to ability program, and you'll hear a little bit more about that.

So with that, I think I'm going to stop and I'm going to turn it over to Michelle Kreffft, and you'll hear directly from our experts.

>> Thank you. So I'm going to start by talking about some of the staff training that we do here in Iowa. As we hire new staff, our supervisors identify those that they feel would benefit from this training, and the purpose really is to introduce our staff to business relationships and building them, tips on how to build them, and learning how to understand the needs of businesses to be better counselors and rehabilitation staff. We really focus on the difference between having a relationship with a business and doing job placement, and it is a whole day training that they get to listen to and participate in doing these activities.

After they have went home and digested this information and maybe put it into some practice, we bring them back and have a part 2, and at this innovative training we have learned from our staff that they enjoy hearing from our

business partners, so we bring business representatives in really to lead this training.

And Emily has been one of our gracious partners who has participated in this, and I'm going to let you hear it from the business perspective.

So what we have done to support the training of their staff are, and a few things, we bring the staff over to our hospital, and I walk them around and I give them a tour. And it's not necessarily a tour of the grounds, but I try to talk about some of our most common openings and at the same time give them a feel for our culture, talk about our hiring process and our screening process, because I know that in the job developer rehabilitation counselor hat that they wear, they often have different clients that they are thinking of, so when they go to a business they already have that client in mind. But if I can help them step back and learn about our business as a whole, they can apply that knowledge to any clients that they work with, anybody that they coach. And I also recognize the value of even just walking around our hospital helps them get a feel for our culture and sometimes even connecting the dots that we are health care, but we are a customer service industry, and unless you have been in some sort of a health care career at some point in the last few years, you may not have recognized that. That you see it purely as doctors and nurses and health care, but at the end of the day it's customer service when it comes down to it, so helping them

get a feel for what we are like and then also understanding what our jobs are looking for. When you see it in person, it can paint a completely different picture than what you may read on a job posting or in a job description.

And then as well I come over and spend time chatting with their staff, answering questions and going through some of their simulations to support as well with their staff training.

>> Awesome. And so we got some great feedback from our staff that we are going to go over in just a little bit, but I wanted to talk more on some of the other training that we do.

Sometimes we have staff that maybe are afraid to go out and build relationships with businesses. They might feel like they went to school to do counseling and not to do sales, and so sometimes they get a little uncomfortable, even seasoned staff, when we talk about going out and building these relationships. So we try really hard to help them see that they are using the same counseling tools, counseling and guidance skills, with our business partners. We are not selling; we are solving problems.

So we have each staff that participates in this one-on-one training identify businesses that they would like to learn more about in the community in which they serve. I then go spend the day with them, and we research that company, try to find out as much information about the

business as we can, figure out how to contact them, and I make a cold call with our staff there.

When I make the cold call, I'm able to set up a business meeting. I come back a second day, and we go out and we do our business meeting with the staff. I ask that the staff don't talk, but that they just listen and learn and figure out their own style as they're venturing into this territory.

When we meet with the business, we just gather information. We learn about their business. We learn more about their hard to fill jobs, their employment projections for the future, what positions they have difficulty with, the positions that they may be have retention issues with, what keeps them up at night in relationship to their work, and what does their ideal employee look like.

As we are gathering this information, we think about what some possible solutions would be, and I always ask for another appointment to come back and identify those solutions with the business.

So the next visit would maybe include some disability sensitivity training for the managers or completing a job analysis to look at work flow and the culture of work, or maybe if we heard that they are looking at a lot of baby Boomers retiring and they're fearful of their recruiting for new staff, we might introduce them to our high school staff and begin some of those business high school partnerships.

Sometimes the business might be hesitant to talk about their needs or they might show resistance, so we use our same motivational introducing counseling skills with our business partners to help them identify what those problems would be so we can help with the solutions.

After we have completed the next step and we began that relationship, then I go back and I meet with the staff, and they start by doing the research. They make the cold call. They conduct the business intake, and they also do the follow up. But I'm there with them to hold their hand, so to speak, if they would run into any issues, just to make it a little bit less scary.

The other thing -- because I love going in and talking to businesses.

The other thing that we are doing is a new business service manual, and this training is going to roll out in the fall and the purpose is to educate our staff on the purpose of having a relationship with the business, and we have identified and created some tools to help our staff. The big thing is we should not be talking about voc rehab services at the first meeting. Really the first meeting is to get a second meeting. We shouldn't be solving their problems when we don't know what their questions or problems are.

So some of the tools that we have put in our toolkit include a business intake, and it's the same as our job candidate intake where we gather more information about the

business to learn more about them and their barriers to gaining and maintaining employees. We learn what works and what doesn't work. This is our time to build rapport, gather information and get it know the business. The

Another tool that we have updated is our job analysis, and this evaluates not only the soft and hard skills of the job but also the culture of work. We have found that if we make a good fit or our candidates, they are more successful in the long term, and in order to do this we really need to know more about the culture. We also take this time to get to know about our business partners' values and strengths, and once we know that, as well as our job candidates, we are able to make a better fit.

We also do a better job of screening for long term employees to fit in. During this time we look at their onboarding process to make sure that we are making accommodations right in away in the training so that our job candidates can be trained in the way that they learn best, again for optimum success.

Our job analysis also comes with solutions to their struggles, so every barrier we find, we try to help identify solutions to help the business.

I wanted to give you a couple of really exciting examples of some job analysis that we did. We went to a veterinary clinic, and after listening to the struggles with retention in their kennel helper position, we recommended a job carve. And this was the feedback we got from the human

resources staff. Quote, "we were definitely impressed with you both. Your attention to detail and willingness to learn about us, our views, our needs, that is a win-win in our book. I like what you added at the end. I like the idea of a new hire focusing on the tasks and assisting the lead kennel staff person and providing extra hands. They will have to work with the team lead, but still providing needed and valuable help," unquote. So what was so exciting about that is sometimes when we think about doing a job card, we think we are doing it to help our job candidate, but really we are also helping the business.

We just did a job analysis in another business, and while we were there -- they make doors -- we learned that their staff were leaving their door line to go make boxes and it was reducing production, and so we recommended a job card for a person to boxes at a lower wage. Our person started, and after three weeks a door maker quit and he was able to be hired in that higher position opening up the modified position for him, which was really exciting.

>> I might add here, as I'm listening to Michelle and Emily talk, that it seems like this is pretty common sense. But it is quite a change in how we've been acting over the last year and a half. So in the past we'd have staff that come on board and we would say, hey, it's really important to go out and get jobs and get people into jobs, so good luck. You know, and we would provide isolated day training and have them read manuals and expect it to occur on the

local level. Well, now through Michelle's work, we are actually bringing staff into a centralized location and not only talking and engaging them through verbal, but having them directly interact with our business partners, and then Michelle will go out on site, into the local office area, and team with local businesses. So it's a real live, and not necessarily training -- I mean, we are training and mentoring, but we are really working with our partners in developing those connections and relationships.

And we found out that there's value to business, as they -- because they're interested in the outreach and figuring out how do they help recruit and retain qualified employees, and we are a resource to that, so as we talk internally with staff, it's kind of really creating that message and making sure that it's a priority from the agency, from the top down, that we have a dual customer approach.

And I think Michelle has talked about it. She's gone out to the local offices, and we have reluctance from staff about how do we go about talking to business or how do we engage. She'll start with our youth and talk about, hey, we are working with high schools, no business wants to turn down their local high school youth program, so let's have a student tour, a meet and greet day, whatever, and that begins to build those relationships and connections, and we embedded that into the staff training that Michelle is outlining. So it has really been a significant effort on

our part on how do we communicate the importance of business engagement.

>> Another tool that we have created with our federal contracting section 503 linkage agreement, and this is an agreement that we put together and sent out to businesses that just kind of outlines the federal contracting common terms and regulations, and then we have the business sign it if they wish with partner with voc rehab and send it back to me.

The partnership does not hold them to anything other than agreeing to partner, which who wouldn't want to partner with us? We are pretty awesome.

Once they sign it and send it back, then I identify the staff that would be located in their county, and we begin that intake process with the business.

Another cool thing that we are doing for tools of our staff is videos. In working with our businesses, we have found that testimonials from other businesses are very valuable, and so we have created some business testimonials, and you can access them at YouTube, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the search engine.

So next is the value of training, and this is some of the quotes from our staff as we went through the new staff training.

I really liked the different job duties at two businesses, how to get more comfortable with businesses and strategies for the first meeting. I also learned that there

were many employers that need our clients, just as much our clients want to work. To be open and direct with employers so they can best serve individuals. It was nice to learn about UnityPoint and have a tour of the facility.

IVRS business questions handout will be very helpful to take back home and utilize with local employers, building business relationships, employers perspective, how to arrange meetings, what to say, and what not to say.

I learned a better approach to contacting the business, adjusting approach based on the audience. The importance of finding the need of the business, where their turnover is, and how to make the best match of a job candidate to fill their needs. I enjoyed meeting with employers and not only role-playing but also picking their brains as to things they need from voc rehab. I enjoyed talking and speaking with different employers and learning what they look for in job candidates, as well as how to properly approach them.

And this one is my favorite. I was dreading the employer role play, but it ended up being my favorite part and the most helpful.

So then I'm going to go into talking a little bit about the reverse job fair, because this is the very first time we have done this and Iowa, and it was pretty -- it was a pretty innovative way of introducing our job candidates to our business partners. The fair actually switches roles with job seekers and businesses, with the businesses being

the ones going from booth to booth to gain information about potential candidates.

We were really successful with our first one, and in fact we were so successful that we are planning three more right now, another one in Des Moines, one in Sioux City, and one in Cedar Rapids. So this started with IVRS and our partners identifying job candidates that we were having a difficult time placing, because of their barriers, and we looked at their career goals. And as we brought candidates in and looked at their goals, we broke them into sectors. Once we identified all of the sectors, and these included advanced manufacturing, health care, customer service, clerical, and I.T. we reached out to our business partners, inviting them to this new concept of meeting potential business candidates. In the invitation, we let them know how many candidates were going to be at the job fair in each particular sector so they could determine if there would be anybody looking for jobs in the areas that they were hiring.

So once we had our businesses invited, we had our job candidates selected, we knew that our job candidates had one shot to very best showcase themselves, and we thought the best way to prepare them was to have a boot camp, and so we had a boot camp three weeks before the job fair. And our first one was two hours long, and it was kind of like a mini conference where we introduced the concept and had them do breakout sessions that included how to look for an interview, resumé, 30-second elevator speech, mock

interviewing, and putting your display together. So we were really fortunate because in the mock interviewing session we had Emily and another business partner come and provide feedback for our participants, and the resumé section was ran by Iowa Works, who provided great feedback to our job candidates as well. Feedback from our job candidates about the boot camp was that they loved the boot camp, and they learned skills that they will forever utilize when seeking employment, and they stated their least favorite session was the 30-second elevator speech because we did video modelling to demonstrate, and it was embarrassing, but it was also the one they found the most helpful.

So our second boot camp was also two hours long and this was a dry run. And this was where our candidates set up their booth and they did their thing. They took everything they learned at the first boot camp and integrated it into their dry run. Again we had our partners and our state partners and our business partners come and walk through and provide feedback to our candidates.

We learned that if you tell your job candidate the boot camp is from 9:00 to 11:00, you must tell them to arrive at 8:00 to get parked and set up, because unfortunately when we said 9:00 to 11:00, some of our job candidates arrived at 9:00. Another cool thing was that some job candidates decided not to have a display, but after seeing other candidates who had wonderful displays that were getting them

more noticed and were more appealing, creating more of a crowd, everyone ended up with a great booth display.

And then we have the event, which was really amazing, and it's hard to duplicate or talk about the energy that was in that room, because it was so wonderful.

Our candidates all showed up with their game face on. We had the booths or the tables organized by color, so each person had a colored tablecloth. So if your goal was to be in the medical field, you had a red tablecloth. If your goal was to be in the clerical field, you had a green tablecloth. And businesses were given a guide when they came, so Emily knew, when she was hiring for nurses, she would look at the red tablecloths. If she was hiring for clerical, she would look at the green tablecloths.

Feedback from our business partners was that they loved the concept, they loved the color coordination, they loved the inside out idea, and they would come to another event in a heartbeat.

I wanted to talk just a tad bit about one success we are particularly proud of. His name is Steve. And he struggled to gain employment. He did not interview well, no matter how much we worked with him, and we had him in job club for multiple years working on his interviewing skills with him, but he always came, and he had the best attitude and the best spirit and the most beautiful smile, and you just loved being around Steve.

When it came to his interviews, he had difficulty communicating his strengths and often had long gaps in his answers that became uncomfortable. So knowing this, in order to have his booth be successful, our staff created dice, and so as businesses rolled the dice, it would land on one of the six sides. If it landed on dependable, he had a script that he had memorized and worked over and over with his staff, practicing, so he was able to deliver a very polished statement of why he was dependable.

He was hired as a full time mail room clerk, which was his goal, by the way, making great money and is still doing a fantastic job. It's because he was able to showcase his skills and abilities in a comfortable environment.

Another example that was pretty cool, we had a person who had a vision impairment and another with a hearing impairment, and their booths really consisted of them doing a job with their assistive technology to show that they could really do the job as well, if not better than other job applicants, with or without an accommodation, and they were both hired as well in their goal areas.

So it was extremely successful. We had 50 business representatives come, 24 job candidates had booths, and ten were offered employment, and that's 42% were offered a job. Some declined the job offers, but we did have five, or 21%, have successful placements from this amazing event.

>> I want to jump in here, too, and stress, it's hard to feel the excitement, even though Michelle is very

enthusiastic about this, but when you are actually on site the day of the event or in one of the boot camps, the people, the job candidates had an energy and excitement that I think was unique to them, and they really had a different perspective of how to communicate some of their talents and abilities through the opportunity of the reverse job fair.

The staff put in a lot of work. You heard that it was collaborative effort, and I think it's important to recognize that a lot of work went into this, and that we are talking about individuals who had spent, in some cases, years unemployed, and they had not been successful in traditional ways. Yet through this one event, five individuals are working now in their chosen career field. Pretty cool stuff.

The other thing that came out of this is we got some news media and actually had a spot on the local television for their evening news. So you think about some of the side effects of not only visibility to some of our business partners, but visibility that's occurring for individuals with disabilities and recognizing the talents of how they can meet business needs was a really cool outcome for this.

>> Yeah. Thank you.

So Kwik Star is another one of our great partners, and they opened their very first star in 1965 in Wisconsin. Today they have over 14,000 coworkers serving gas in 475 Kwik Trip and Kwik Star locations in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa.

They have recognized that by carving out a job as a retail helper, their sales clerks could provide better customer service to their guests. When a store identifies that they would like a retail helper, they send a link to IVRS for our candidates to apply. At that time our staff go into the store and begin the intake process with the store to make sure we have a good fit.

The job description lists the position as, quote, "our retail helper positions provide employment opportunities for those with disabilities. We partner with Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa departments of voc rehab to fill these positions. Job responsibilities include general duties in the store, such as cleaning and cleaning the parking lot, windows, doors, counters, sweeping, mopping, taking out garbage, filling the window cleaner pumps. Qualifications include the ability to stand and walk for an entire shift. Recently one of our retail helpers was promoted to a guest services clerk, opening up a position for another qualified candidate. Last year we had eight placements with Kwik Trip, and so far this year we have had four, with two in an employed status and seven openings that we are working on filling. We would like you to learn more about this awesome partnership by watching this video.

>> As a reminder, when we look at the video, we are hoping that this will work on your system, but we'll mute the phones, and to hear the audio, you'll need to listen through your computer speakers. And so get your speakers

on, and then we'll come back on live on the audio after the video is done. It's about almost a five-minute video.

One of the things we are trying to with the videos, though, and we talked a little bit early about the ID action videos, but it was a way for us to move out to our VR staff some mobile technology. So as staff take out iPads and iPhones and laptops out in the community, they are doing presentations. Here's an example that we can show in a three to five-minute video clip of business talking to business. And we are still in the implementation stage of how are we using this and how do we develop it, but we think we are excited about the possibilities with this.

As we talk about visibility, too, I want to mention that in Iowa we have what's called the Iowa job honors award video, and we have had a number of different businesses featured in that, talking about the value of overcoming barriers to employment, businesses talking to business. Within the last month, our governor had a weekly press conference where he talked about the value of looking at individuals with barriers to employment, including people with disabilities as a talent pipeline, and we were able to feature a couple of Iowa businesses. So these videos are just another example of how we are trying to increase communication out with our partners. So we hope you have your speakers on.

>> I first learned about the opportunities of the retail helper position at the Kwik Star stores from Michelle Krefft, our state placement person with vocational rehabilitation.

>> Hi, I'm Michelle Krefft, business consultant with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. I first met Jo Lynn, the return to work coordinate with Kwik Star, through the national employment attachment she had worked with other state VR agencies on hiring persons with disabilities, and Kwik Star actually created a retail helper position where persons who had most significant disabilities were able to perform some of the duties within the store that other employees may have traditionally completed.

However, this job carve allowed for our candidates to perform some of those duties, freeing up their full-time employees to be able to better assist the customers and provide some of that customer service that's so important.

When we first heard about this position, we were thrilled because we knew we had candidates that would be a fantastic fit. So Mike Howell and I met with the managers of Kwik Star in Waterloo to really learn more about what they were looking for in that ideal employee, who is going to be the best fit for them, and how can we make sure that our candidate is going to be extremely successful there?

Our counselors in Waterloo then worked with our candidates. They found Ed, who you will see very soon to be the perfect candidate. And when we introduced him to Kwik

Star, it was a match made in heaven, so we are excited that about partnership.

>> So I have this job candidate who happens to be deaf but I know can work and he knew could work.

>> Hi, I'm Angie, assistant store leader here at Kwik Star. I'm here to talk to you about Ed, our retail helper. It is a modified job, but, again, he does a lot. Ed is very funny. I think whenever you have somebody come in that you're unsure of with a disability, how it's going to work out, I think that we transitioned with him really well, communicated really well with him. We devised a list that he looks at every day. He comes into work, so he knows exactly what he has to do, with helps with some of the communication. Having him here helps a lot. It allows us to get some of our other duties done. I think people underestimate what they are actually capable of. They think with a disability that they can't do a lot of the things, which I think they prove us wrong every day, that they are capable of doing a lot more if you just show them what they need to do and help them along, and they will pick up on it.

>> It blossomed from there. It was a good match. The person who ended up getting the job and continues with it, so that's -- it's a great success story.

>> INTERPRETER: Thank you VR for helping me find a job, and it's a good job for me, because it's three hours of work, and I work 9:00-12:00, and that works the same for

other areas as well, and I work five days a week here. I really do like the job.

>> Hiring Ed, as far as accommodations go, it didn't cost us but a few sheets of paper, a little bit of time to come up with a list, but nothing that we wouldn't do for any other associate. We printed it off, and it didn't cost us anything. Everything else was as if we hired somebody else off the street. I think the biggest thing was when customers would come in and try and talk to him, I think that was one of the biggest -- well, how are customers going to know? He has done a very good job of just, you know, looking at the customer, pointing to his name tag that says, you know, I'm hearing impaired, and then he brings the customer to another employee to help them. So he's very aware, which is very helpful.

>> INTERPRETER: Thank you, voc rehab. Thank you.

(End of video.)

>> I hope that worked for you, and we are going to make a little adjustment here in our presentation. So we had a second video we were going to share in a second, but I think we'll bypass that and skip it to make sure we give Emily some time to be able to share a little bit about UnityPoint Health Systems and what we are doing with them. But hopefully you see, that's an example of there's a number of ways that we can use that video and parcel it out to not only staff, job candidates, but to our business partners. So Michelle I'm going to turn it back over to you because we

want to hear a quick summary of our work with Manpower Staffing too.

>> Yes, thank you. So is we have an access to ability program with Manpower, and we have learned that some of our job candidates need extra work experience to gain additional knowledge in their career field. We partner with Manpower to refer our candidates. They have the skills necessary. They maybe just lack the experience. So this provides them a trial period to really showcase their skills to the business.

Manpower puts our job candidates through a screening process. We have a passport set up where our voc rehab counselors or rehabilitation staff can go with our candidates to make sure that they get the necessary accommodations through that screening process.

Really, the coolest thing is we have a Manpower and a vehicle rehab champion in every area office. They meet once a month to discuss referrals, job openings, and what job candidates are best for each of the different jobs.

We talk about how our job candidates did and how they are doing and what they still need to improve upon. And this really is the true definition of a partnership with honesty and trust.

When we see referrals going down the regional manager and I have some fun competitions and reboot our staff to get our referrals back up. Last year, we found that we had 99 referrals of job candidates to Manpower, and 28 placements,

which was also 28%. This is just a little misleading, because many times our job candidates are hired by the company prior to that 90 days being done and so our counselors are closing the --

In this year in April we had eight referrals with three patients, and so this year we have one status 26 closure.

>> I'm going to turn it over to Emily and really appreciate the work that UnityPoint Health has done, not only working with voc rehab but working with our community providers and organizations. And Emily and Amanda, Emily's supervisor, have been really supportive of not only recognizing how this is good for business and their employees, but as an opportunity to outreach to a diversified applicant pool to look at how UnityPoint Health recruits applicants into some of their high need areas. So we are very happy to have Emily with us, and I'm going to turn it over to Emily

>> All right, thanks David.

Well, so as David mentioned in my wonderful introduction, thank you for that as well David, that my background came from the disability services field and for several years I worked as a job developer, so along the same lines of what the voc rehab counselors do in supporting these individuals and finding employment.

And when I transitioned into my career that I'm in now, with UnityPoint Health Des Moines, we had made a connection with voc rehab and they wanted to come and chat with me

about all of the things that voc rehab can do for business, and I of course invited them with open arms. I was, although very familiar with what they could do, I wanted to build that relationship because I saw the value. We sat down, we had some conversations, and by the end of the hour meeting, we started to brainstorm, could we contract directly? And as someone who has worn that hat before, it is so challenging to know what every industry and what every business is potentially looking for because you don't know what your client is going to want to do. You don't know what their career goal is going to be until you meet with them, and that's a daunting task. And so I knew that there would be a natural benefit, having someone embedded within a business, even if to work on a portion of the scale of what one of their typical counselors work on.

So we started figuring out a way, how could we make direct referrals? So that's what happens today. Their job candidates get referred directly to me. And I provide some of the very same services that their counselors might be doing with their applicants, but primarily for UnityPoint Health Des Moines. I do things like help them develop and customize the resumé, making sure it speaks to UnityPoint Health, making sure it speaks to the position they are in. I help them construct their application if need be. All applications are all online, and our system at times maybe doesn't speak the best to every browser, and so I have the chance to walk through the application with these

individuals, make sure that they can navigate the job posting page, how they can contact us, ask questions, and really make sure that they have all of the tools possible as they begin their job search and application process with us. I also have the unique ability to support them in preparing for their interviews. In many departments, I'm familiar with the questions that will be asked. But I also know what our interview style is like, what our interview process, from our phone screenings that happen first to a one on one with a manager and a peer panel interview. And knowing what applicants can expect and practice for that interview can be a huge confidence boost at a time when they need to have confidence and they need to be able to sell themselves.

I'm also able to offer some alternative supports, like Applicant tours, staff tours, staff trainings, like we talked about previous, attending various conferences that they are working on, and really trying to be an advocate as well as a tool to their counselors, because I know that the more I can help the VR counselors what our business is looking for, the more they can make appropriate referrals. But at the same time I approach that with some caution because we are such a large employer, and we have so many different areas that that's where, again, it is almost impossible to know what every single job, what every single position is looking for, but there is still a ton of value in having them get to know us as an organization and

understand a little bit about what health care is doing today.

So one of the other ways that we have been supporting people with disabilities and we have in many ways worked with voc rehab on this, but this is actually a policy that UnityPoint Health Des Moines has put into place in the last year, and although we have just formally started doing it, it at times would happen informally, although at times it didn't happen. And health care is a demanding workforce when it comes to the physical demands placed on our staff's bodies. And we know that people get hurt. It doesn't feel good if you go out on disability and you come to the point where you can't return to your job, and you get a letter from your employer saying, well, thank you for your time, but your employment will end because you can no longer fiscal the essential functions of your position, and as we started trying to figure out, what's the best way to go about this, whenever possible we would find somebody a new position, but it wasn't always the case. And we knew that not only was it the right thing to do for your staff, it's what we needed to do at the end of the day. We do open ourselves up for lawsuit when we don't work to support these individuals who have dedicated their time and service to us, and now as a result of an injury, sometimes it happens on the job, but not always. We know that life can happen and can result in an injury or an illness that leaves you unable to do your job, and so when that happens, when we know that

somebody can't go back to work, we begin working with them to rehome them, and that's just a term that we have kind of allowed to organically develop, because we know that with many employees, they are with us for life. We are a second home for them. And if you're not able to return to your position, where can we help you find a new home? And so I do the same things with them as with any other job candidate that I coach. We then evaluate a resumé, evaluate options, do job shadows, but it is unique in that we ultimately place someone in an open position. When I say place, it is not a competitive process. They don't have to interview, but merely have to be qualified. They have them do a job shadow where they spend some time in the department and get to see the position, because if they come back to us and say they like that role, their job is then theirs. Since formally starting this in 2015, I have had eight staff come through my office to be rehomed, and six of them have successfully been rehomed, and I will also point out that the two that were not had some significant things going on, as well as some corrective action issues, and things that we could not control.

But whenever possible, we will work to find a way to rehome someone, whether it's because they were a nurse and were hurt on the job and can no longer lift patients, or an employee dealing with personal mental health issues and recognize that the stress caused in their current position was not conducive to a stable mental health for themselves

and had to find something that was less stressful and fewer hours, and so we did. We rehomed an employee related to their personal mental health, and so I have been very excited to be a part of this team.

It is a very delicate process to navigate within our business. We have a team hiring approach, and to be approached by our HR department and being told that this person is going to come shadow, and they're qualified for your job, and oh, by the way, if they like your jobs, then it's theirs and they are yours can be a touchy message to get. So we really try to manage up these employees whenever possible, and show any potential managers this they are very capable individuals. We wouldn't be suggesting that they would be placed in an area if they weren't qualified, if they didn't have the skills, and if they weren't an appropriate match. So we have been very excited that we have had the success that we have had so far. And like I said, before this formal approach, it would happen informally at times, but we wanted to make sure that what we were doing was right and we were protecting ourselves as a business at the end of the day.

One of the other pieces that I'll speak just briefly about that we have started -- well, we didn't start this. It began with UnityPoint in 2011, but Project SEARCH is a job training program that is all over the world, and although we were the first in Iowa, we were not the first ever. This program has been wonderful. Students go through

an internship type program where they get to do three different internships. There is classroom training that focuses on what it takes to get and keep a job, and we have had five classes graduate, 60 students in total. UnityPoint has hired 15 of them in a variety of roles, including food nutrition, lab keeping, supply techs, patient transporters, data entry, laundry workers, and a number of other positions. And although I can share data with you, there is no data point that will express the positive impact that this program has had on our culture in helping us to be truly inclusive for people with disabilities.

And so I'll have a story of this that I will wrap this up of a young man named Steven who participated in the very first Project SEARCH. When Steven was born he weighed less than a pound and wasn't expected to live. Although his first couple of years was very trying, he did survive. At the made it through high school, and after graduating joined us with Project SEARCH. In his internships, he got a chance to intern in the lab, and that's where he was able to blossom. He found that he had the natural skills to fit in, and he could do the job. And the great thing is that if Steven wouldn't have had the chance to do this internship, he may not have had a chance to be interviewed at all. He had no work experience. He had no professional training, and the internship allowed him to really prove himself. So today he's a lab support tech. He does things like entering and verifying patient medical record information, sample

management, putting supplies together as well as assisting throughout our clinics or campuses when needed. And one of the cool things is Steven has one of the highest accuracy ratings for data entry and his productivity does not suffer. So although he has an intellectual disability as well as a physical disability, he has proven that he can do anything that he puts his mind to, and that internship was really the key in allowing him to prove himself and it also took the emphasis off the typical application, resumé and interview, which I said Steven would have lacked in that process. He celebrated four years with us just this March and continues to do well. Yay!

>> Thank you, Emily. UnityPoint Health has been a great partner with us and I really appreciate your work and efforts.

Just a couple of side notes here real quick. The videos that we showed we'll make available through the link. They are closed captioned. I am not sure that the closed captioning was working today but I want to make sure that you know that they are closed captioned.

And Emily was talking about the Project SEARCH. One of the memorable events in Project SEARCH history was senator Tom harken, who has been a champion for people with disabilities, actually did a tour at Project SEARCH at UnityPoint Health, and it was at that press conference that he announced his requirement from the senate, so that was a big day. It initially started out, we paid 20% of her

salary, so we made sure she was reporting, four hours a week would be dedicated toward working with individuals with disabilities, VR job applicants. We have managed to evolve from that into our an outcome based payment system, where so as she is working with individuals that we have referred that are VR eligible candidates, we can pay for the employment outcomes, and that seems to be working well, and we review that on a regular basis.

So I think we have effectively used all of our time. So we are, that's strategy on our part, so we are not going to probably have an opportunity to respond to questions, maybe, but Philip I'm going to turn over to you for some summary and any final comments that you want to make.

>> I want to check with the operator. Do we have any questions?

>> OPERATOR: No one in queue.

>> I'm just going to offer some comments as David asked -- we have traveled extensively to Iowa. We learned and saw best practices being implemented on the ground, focusing on youth with disabilities, expanding job opportunities through models like Project SEARCH, but also really innovative new partnerships such as rehoming. That is a new initiative which is really I think very brilliant and I think it offers a model, moving ahead, for other employers in other states to really think about. As workers age, may age into disability, and well, you don't want to lose a valuable worker who has a lot of experience, and that

model I think is widely applicable to a lot of fields beyond just the create work being done by UnityPoint Health in the health care space.

You can follow up with any of our staff members. My e-mail is PhilipP@RespectAbility.org. If you didn't have a chance to ask a question today, I'm more than happy to follow up via e-mail. We will also be putting up the PowerPoint for this webinar up on our website soon. I'll make sure to send that out soon. If anyone is interested, we would want to no one what our next webinar is, Wednesday, July 17th at 1:30 p.m. We'll be looking at best practices in action at the state level, a more global view, talking about a company called Specialisterne. If you have been paying attention to the field for a while, you have probably heard of Thorkill Sonne, who is working really hard on helping people on the autism spectrum to get into cutting-edge jobs. We'll be talking about what Specialisterne has done to get people with disabilities into high-end, high tech jobs with Microsoft, partnering with leaders in government, such as governors, and gotten people in the high tech sector on board with people in jobs with disabilities. Thank you everyone for joining us today. I look forward to seeing you next time. Bye.