

RETURN TO WORK WITH MEDICAL RESTRICTIONS (HR-4.10)

Summary	<p>Carolinas HealthCare System values the health and well-being of all team members. Sometimes, team members need time away from work to rest and recover from illness or injury. The Medical Leave & Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) are two of the benefits that provide team members with this ability. Team members may be ready to come back to work but are unable to return to regular duties or work hours as a result of an illness or injury. However, it is a great benefit to Carolinas HealthCare System and to the well-being of the team member to get the team member back to work in some manner when possible. To address this situation, Carolinas HealthCare System offers the return to work and temporary transitional assignment benefit.</p>
Applies to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Carolinas HealthCare System full-time and part-time team members that have completed the 90-day orientation period and are returning to work with medical work restrictions due to an injury or illness. ➤ All Carolinas HealthCare System team members with workers' compensation injuries or illnesses are eligible from the first day of employment.
Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Regular Job or Position ➤ Temporary Transitional Assignment Position ➤ Reasonable Accommodation
Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General Guidelines ➤ Team Member Responsibilities ➤ Leader Responsibilities
Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Policy 3.08, Short Term Disability (STD) Benefit ➤ Policy 4.02, Disabilities: Team Members & Persons Applying for Jobs ➤ Policy 4.06, Work-Related Injury or Illness ➤ Policy 4.09, Medical and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Benefits ➤ Policy 4.11, Team Member Medical Approval (Non-Leaves) ➤ Policy 5.15, Team Member Counseling
Related Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fitness for Duty Form

RETURN TO WORK WITH MEDICAL RESTRICTIONS (HR-4.10)**Definitions****➤ Regular Job or Position**

The job the team member was in prior to taking leave for illness or injury.

➤ Temporary Transitional Assignment Position

This assignment is made for a team member returning to work after an illness or injury with temporary work restrictions. The assignment is designed to allow the team member to work while recovering from the illness or injury. Therefore, it is a temporary situation and will not be offered for more than 90 calendar days in a rolling 12-month period. The assignment may include modified job duties, a different position, and/or reduced work hours.

➤ Reasonable Accommodation

Modifying or adjusting a job or the work environment that enables a qualified team member to perform essential (necessary) job functions.

General Guidelines

- All eligible full-time and part-time team members returning to work with medical work restrictions due to an illness or injury are offered the temporary transitional assignment benefit.
- A Return to Work counselor will review the team member work restrictions from the doctor's notes. The counselor will assist in deciding whether the team member is able to continue working in their regular unit or department. If the team member cannot continue working in their regular unit or department due to the medical restrictions, the facility will be asked to attempt to find a temporary transitional assignment for the team member. If the facility cannot find an assignment, the counselor will assist in attempting to find one within the Carolinas HealthCare System for the team member.
- If the team member receiving a workers' compensation benefit is offered a temporary transitional assignment, the team member must take it. Refusal to take the assignment may cause the workers' compensation benefit to end.
- If a team member is not receiving the workers' compensation benefit and is offered a temporary transitional assignment, the team member may accept or refuse the assignment. Team members who refuse an assignment may continue to use earned PTO and/or any remaining medical leave or FMLA leave benefits. Refusal of a position results in the counselor ending the attempt to find a position with the team member, and may affect certain benefits.
- The temporary transitional assignment benefit is offered to team members for up to 90 calendar days. The temporary transitional assignment may be used up to 90 days in a rolling 12 month period. This period begins with the date of doctor release to return to work with medical restrictions. It ends when restrictions are removed by the doctor or at the end of 90 calendar days, whichever comes first.

- Team members working and recovering from an illness or injury can be secure in their pay stability. Team members in temporary transitional assignment are paid at their base rate of pay for all hours worked, up to their standard weekly work hours. If a team member's assignment includes reduced hours, the team member may be able to receive other pay through the short term disability and/or workers' compensation benefits. Team members in a temporary transitional assignment may earn pay up to the amount of their income before their illness or injury; overtime is not permitted in temporary transitional assignments.
- Benefits remain in place during the temporary transitional assignment. As usual, medical plan costs are deducted from the team member's earnings.
- A team member may be unable to return to their regular job at the end of the 90 day temporary transitional assignment benefit. In this instance, the team member's situation will be reviewed. During this review, the team member may be placed on leave of absence. The need may exist for the team member to enter into a job with permanent modifications. Approved team members will be assisted by a Transition Services coordinator in finding a position. At this time, the possible need for Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) accommodations will be considered. (Policy 4.02, [Disabilities: Team Members & Persons Applying for Jobs](#)).
- If a position is not found within 90 calendar days after working with the Transition Services coordinator and whether or not a temporary assignment is found, unfortunately the employment relationship with Carolinas HealthCare System will end unless accommodations necessary to comply with the ADA.
- If a team member receiving the workers' compensation benefit is offered a suitable position and it is approved by the doctor, not taking this position may cause the workers' compensation benefit to end. Under workers' compensation law, permanent reassignment to a new position has certain requirements. These requirements need to be considered and discussed with the Carolinas HealthCare System Workers' Compensation Department to ensure all laws are complied with in a position change.

Team Member Responsibilities

- When a team member is ready to return to work, the team member is to have their doctor complete the [Fitness for Duty Form](#). If a team member is receiving the workers' compensation benefit, a Work Status/Treatment Report will be used instead. These forms show the team member's medical restrictions and how long these restrictions will last.
- The return to work benefit often involves finding a different position for a team member with permanent or longer term medical restrictions. It is important to recognize that this benefit is a partnership between Carolinas HealthCare System and the team member.
- Team members are expected to be proactive in their placement efforts. This includes having regular contact with the Return to Work counselor or transition services coordinator and following direction/suggestions. Lack of team member active participation and cooperation in placement may result in whether the team member gets a placement.
- While a team member is in a temporary transition assignment, the team member is expected to meet all performance standards of the job. Poor performance or misconduct that arises will be addressed through a performance improvement process. For more details, please see Policy 5.15, [Team Member Counseling](#).

- The workers' compensation benefit is guided by state laws. It has stricter requirements for team members. To be eligible for this benefit, team members must be proactive in their placement efforts. This includes keeping regular contact with the Return to Work counselor or Transition Services coordinator. It also requires team members to follow the directions of the Transition Services coordinator. If a team member does not do these things, the workers' compensation benefit and the employment relationship with Carolinas HealthCare System may end.
- If a team member accepts a different permanent position due to medical restrictions, the team member may later wish to transfer positions. The standard transfer request procedure is to be followed except that the waiting period between the two transfers will be waived.
- During the 90 days in which a team member is assisted with finding a job, the team member is to follow the Carolinas HealthCare System standard interview process. The same applies for a transfer after a placement.

Leader Responsibilities

- If a unit or department is not able to provide a temporary transitional assignment for a team member, this must be recorded by the unit department or leader. This statement will be given to the relevant Vice President of Human Resources for review. The unit or department's vice president will also be put on notice. The statement may be used to assist with the placement or non-placement of the team member in another position.
- If it has been decided that a team member cannot return to their regular job due to medical restrictions, the unit or department leader may be asked to assist with efforts in finding another job for the team member.
- For workers' compensation injuries/illness, if no assignment is found, the workers' compensation benefit paid to the team member is charged back to the regular unit or department.
- The team member's regular unit or department is fully responsible for the regular base rate pay during the Return to Work program benefit period. This applies even when a team member is not working in their regular unit or department. This pay responsibility continues until:
 - The team member is placed in another permanent position, or
 - The employment relationship with the team member ends. If a job is not found for the team member within 90 days, employment will end.

Related Policies

- Policy 3.08, [Short Term Disability \(STD\) Benefit](#)
- Policy 4.02, [Disabilities: Team Members & Persons Applying for Jobs](#)
- Policy 4.06, [Work-Related Injury or Illness](#)
- Policy 4.09, [Medical and Family Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\) Benefits](#)
- Policy 4.11, [Team Member Medical Approval \(Non-Leaves\)](#)
- Policy 5.15, [Team Member Counseling](#)