



RETAINWORKS 2026 ECHO:

A Health Navigation Model for
Supporting Employment

Thursdays, March 5 - April 30 | Noon - 1 PM CST

**RETAIN
WORKS** | Retaining
Employment
and Talent After
Injury/Illness
Network





April 9, 2026

Introduction to Work as a Health Outcome

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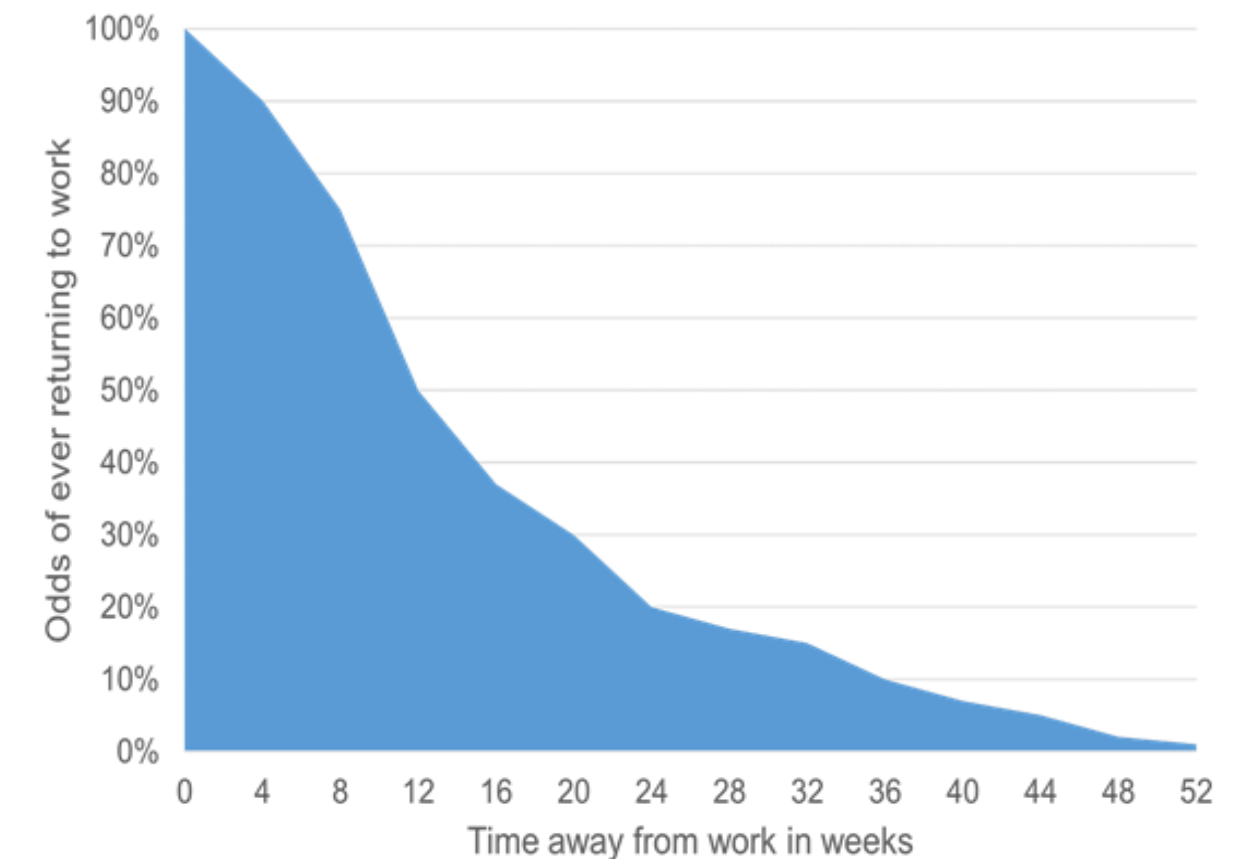
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- The Importance of Early Intervention
- The Realities of Social Security Disability Income
- Work is a Health Outcome

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY INTERVENTION

The FACTS:

- The likelihood that your patient will return to work ¹:
 - ...drops to 50% after 12 weeks of absence...
 - ...and down to almost ZERO after 52 weeks of absence.
- At just 2 weeks following loss of employment ²:
 - Patients show poor psychosocial outcomes,
 - are up to 2.5 times more likely to commit suicide,
 - have higher overall mortality rates, for the themselves and their spouses.
- Overall, those unable to return to work due to health reasons experience:
 - Increased poverty
 - Reduced quality of life
 - More severe health conditions

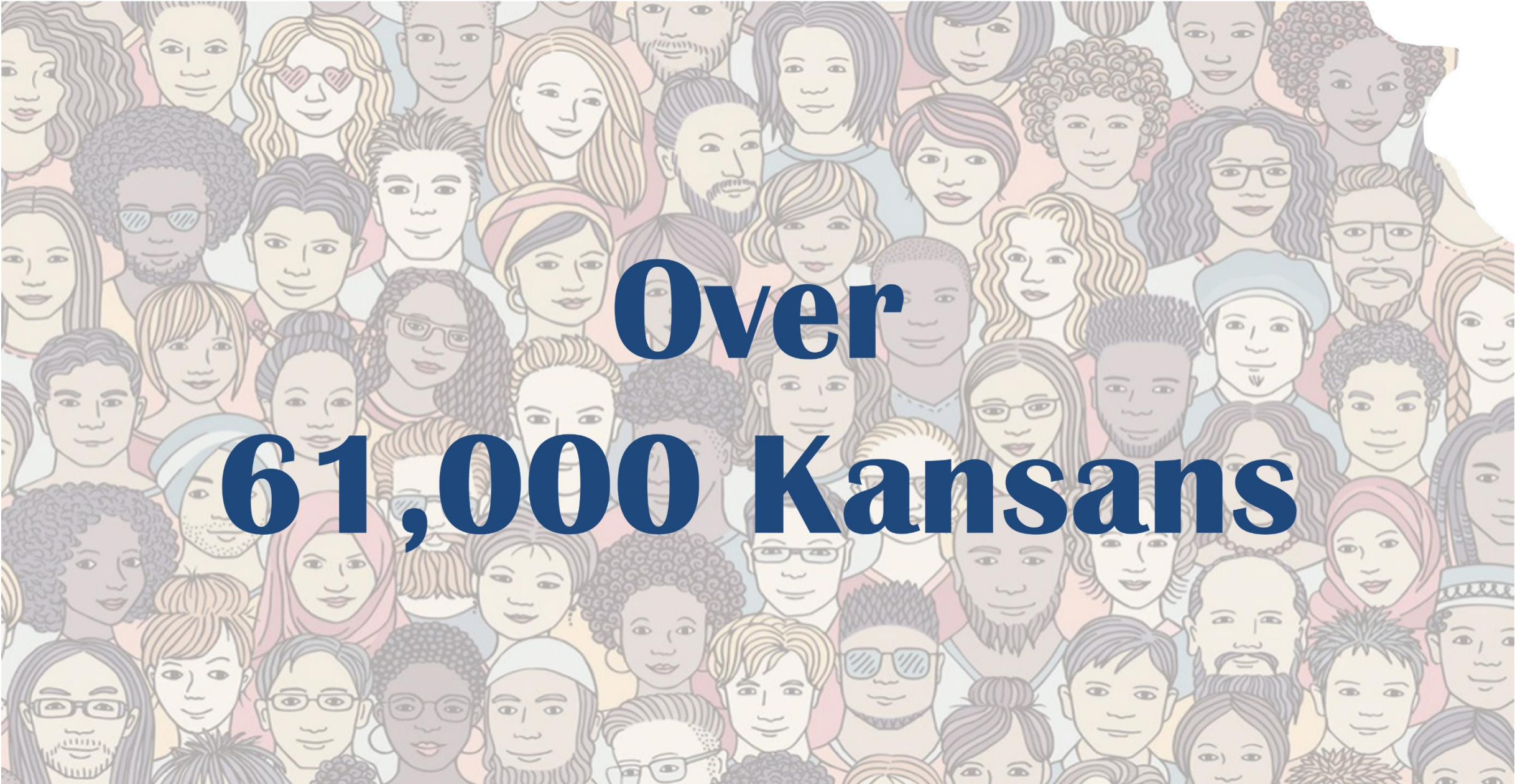


Source: United States Department of Labor

**We want to hear
from *you*!**

*Please take a moment to
respond to the poll*





**Over
61,000 Kansans**

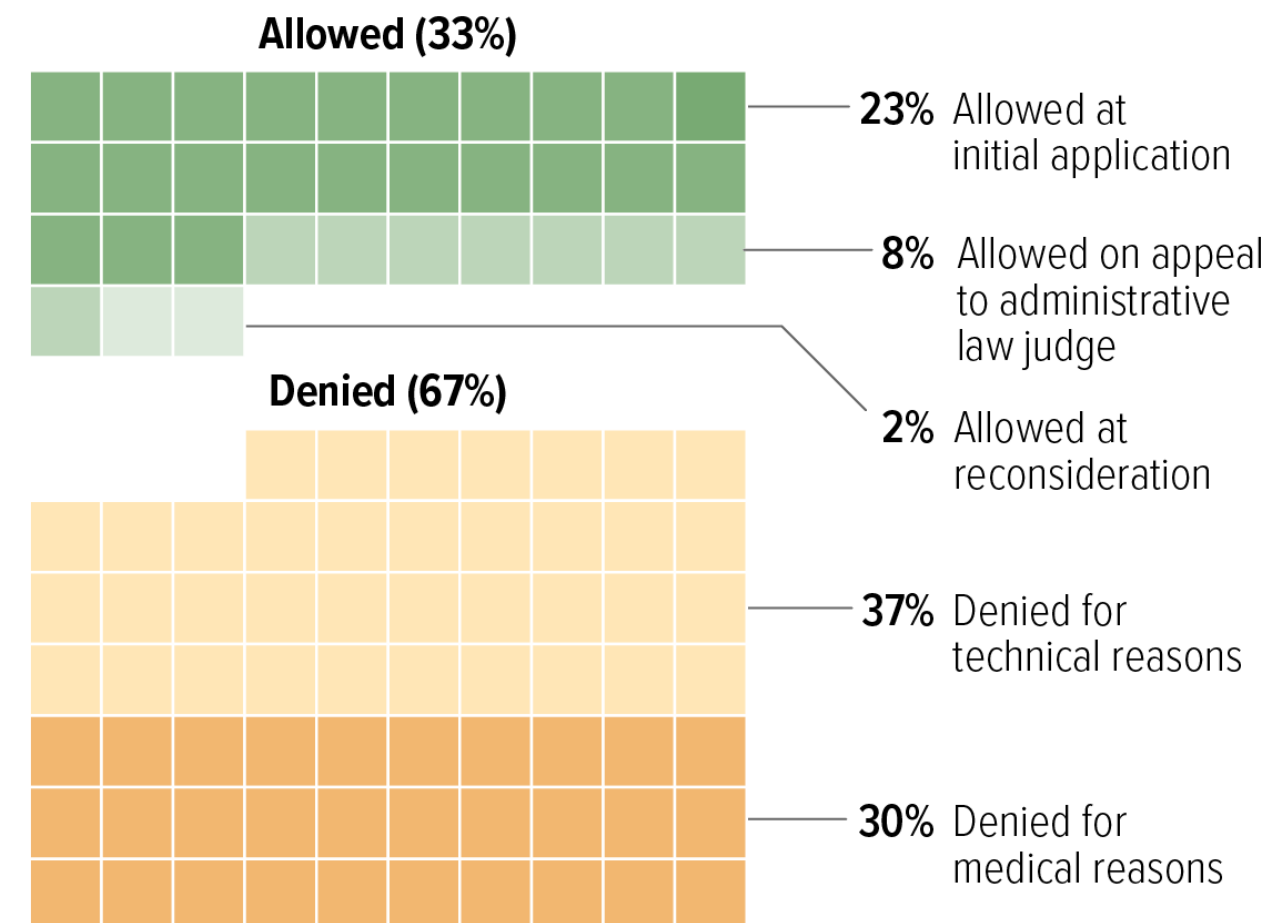
THE REALITIES OF APPLYING FOR DISABILITY

- Asset Limits [5](#):
 - \$2,000 for individuals and \$3,000 for couples
 - Cash, stocks, bonds
 - Items not convertible to cash in 20 working days
 - Certain property (excluding primary residence)
 - Life insurance policies
- Initial Application [6 7](#):
 - Wait time was 7.7 months in 2024.
 - 1 in 3 applications are approved
- Appeal – While waiting... [6](#):
 - 8,000 will file for bankruptcy.
 - 18,300 will pass away.

SSDI Applications: About 1 in 3 Ultimately Allowed

[10](#)

Percent of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) applications



Note: Components may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Source: CBPP based on data from the Social Security Administration. Data are for applications from 2018 through 2020, the most recent years for which nearly complete data are available

CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES | CBPP.ORG

LIFE ON DISABILITY – The Poverty Pipeline

- 24.2% of working-aged people with disabilities live in poverty, compared to 9.4% for those without a disability [8](#)
- National average monthly benefit [5](#):
 - \$1,581 overall – \$18,960 annually
 - Equivalent to \$9.11 per hour if compared to full-time hours
- Living Wages in Kansas [9](#):
 - Individual - \$44,994 annually, or \$3,750 per month
 - \$21.63 per hour needed to earn a living wage
 - Family of 4 (2 adults + 2 children) - \$103,975 annually, or \$8,665 per month
 - \$20.93 per hour needed by each adult to earn a living wage

Shortfall for a Disabled Kansan

$$\begin{array}{r} \$9.11 \text{ per hour} \\ - \$21.63 \text{ per hour} \\ \hline = (\$12.52) \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} \$18,960 \text{ annual benefits} \\ - \$44,994 \text{ average expenses} \\ \hline = (\$26,034) \end{array}$$

PEOPLE WANT TO WORK

Ask Questions

- What do you know about disability benefits?
- What is your main barrier to employment?
 - Top 4 barriers workers with disabilities reported [11](#):
 1. Limitations related directly to their disability
 2. Lack of education or training
 3. The need for special features on the job
 4. Lack of transportation
- Would you be interested in finding a career that could accommodate your disability barriers?

Offer Recommendations

- Request accommodations from your employer:
 - New or modified equipment
 - Physical changes to the workplace
 - Policy changes to the workplace
 - Changes in work tasks, job structure or schedule
 - Additional training
- Ask your employer about FMLA eligibility.
- Do your benefits include short-term disability?

PEOPLE *WANT* TO WORK

- The patient may need intervention from several members of their care team:
 - Impairment and function may need to be assessed.
 - RTW timelines should be established.
 - Progress should be monitored.
- Communication is imperative (with the patient *and* among care team members):
 - Use language with the patient that focuses on what they **CAN** do rather than what they can't do.
 - Ensure the patient has a clear understanding of what they can do safely,
 - Teams should communicate about the patient's recovery and capacity to work.

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH RESOURCES & TOOLS

TOOLKIT RESOURCES FOR PATIENTS

Your Work and Health Roadmap: A Guide to Getting Support

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QUICK HELP GUIDE

If You Need...	Contact...
Help understanding and documenting your work limits	A healthcare provider
Help finding a new job	KANSASWORKS.com or your nearest Workforce Center
Support for a long-term disability	Vocational Rehabilitation or your nearest VR Office
Legal help with discrimination	Kansas Human Rights Commission : 785-296-3206
General job accommodation information	Job Accommodation Network (JAN) : 1-800-526-7234 askjan.org

TOOLKIT RESOURCES FOR PATIENTS & PROVIDERS

Healthcare Provider Employment Resource
"Work is a Health Outcome"

Patient Name: (First) _____ (Last) _____ Date of Birth _____

Patient Form instructions: You are responsible for completing this section

If you have an injury or illness that is impacting your daily work or your job outlook, the following forms will help you through this process to advocate for needs and identify what type of daily work would be suitable for you. The information can be used in working with Workforce advocates for opportunities to enhance your employment. We will ask you with the following questions to help identify areas of need and limitations so the provider can assist in making recommendations.

1. What type of work are you looking for, or trying to return to? (Circle One: manual labor-light / medium labor-heavy / office work) Briefly describe: _____

2. What physical or mental limitations are you experiencing and what are you currently unable to do (e.g., lifting, standing, musculoskeletal, depression, etc.) _____

3. Please briefly describe your condition: _____

You are responsible for taking the steps to get the form completed:

If you access this form online, or you are handed this form, and you:

• have no upcoming appointment with your provider, please contact their office to ask about their availability. They may require a separate appointment.

• have an upcoming appointment, ask your provider's office if this form can be done at the same time.

Healthcare Provider Form Instructions:

• Use questions 1-3 above to guide your recommendations and assessment to help the patient meet their needs.

• Your patient will use this form to advocate for themselves with their local WorkForce Center, their employer, or their union. Help them understand what job might be best for them considering their health limitations.

Your patient is seeking assistance with their employment and has indicated their health is impacting their ability to work. Please find two forms attached and determine with your patient which is appropriate for their condition: **PHYSICAL HEALTH FORM** or **MENTAL HEALTH FORM**.

PHYSICAL HEALTH FORM:

Functional Restrictions – Examples of restrictions that would limit the amount or type of work your patient can do:

• Patient can only functionally sit for 6 hours a workday = frequent

• Patient can stand/walk the other 2 hours of the workday = occasional

Reasonable Accommodations – Examples of recommendation(s) to help with body positioning during workday:

• ergonomic chair

• ergonomic mouse

• standing desk

• a flexible schedule

• ergonomic keyboard

• an alteration of what is feasible in a stand/sit schedule

MENTAL HEALTH FORM:

Functional Restrictions – Examples of restrictions that would limit the amount or type of work your patient can do:

• Patient can give a presentation up to 1 hour/day = seldom

• Patient can interact directly with customer/client up to 6 hours/day = frequent

Reasonable Accommodations – Examples of recommendation(s) to help with body positioning during workday:

• utilizing a communication board to prevent disruptions during a workday.

• a flexible schedule

• allowing to focus on one task at a time

• a transition in job duties

Please sign and date the form after completion and return to the provider.

Healthcare Provider Employment Resource
"Work is a Health Outcome"

Physical Health Restrictions Form - Completed by Provider

Patient Name: _____ Date of Birth _____

Date of Injury/Illness: _____ Date of Surgery (if applicable): _____

Please circle the following: Employed? YES or NO Seeking Employment? YES or NO

Provider (optional): You may attach your own preferred form, but we request you still sign and date the bottom.

☐ In lieu of this form, I am attaching my standard WORK STATUS form.

Patient Can:	Never	Seldom Up to 10% 0 - 1 hours	Occasional 11 - 33% 1 - 3 hours	Frequent 34 - 66% 3 - 6 hours	Constant 67 - 100% Not restricted
Sit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stand / Walk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Climb (Ladder / Stairs)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Twist	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bend / Stoop	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Squat / Kneel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Crawl	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other applicable restrictions (lifting, etc.): -

Please select degree of restriction:

☐ The patient's injury/condition **SIGNIFICANTLY** impairs their employment.
Example: a person with a serious back injury who works on their feet most of the day, and lifts items that weigh 20 lbs or more throughout their shift.

☐ The patient's injury/condition **MILD to MODERATELY** impairs their employment.
Example: a person with Major Depressive Disorder in a role with basic assigned duties with low complexity, and symptoms that are being managed.

Reasonable Accommodation Section (Examples: assistive equipment, a flexible schedule, etc.)

Is follow up needed for this patient? YES or NO If yes, date of follow up: _____

Provider Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Provider Signature: _____

Healthcare Provider Employment Resource
"Work is a Health Outcome"

Mental Health Restrictions Form - Completed by Provider

Date of Birth _____

Current Mental Health Diagnosis (if known): _____

Employed? YES or NO Seeking Employment? YES or NO

You may attach your own preferred form, but we request you still sign and date the bottom.

☐ In lieu of this form, I am attaching my standard WORK STATUS form.

Patient Can:	Never	Seldom Up to 10% 0 - 1 hours	Occasional 11 - 33% 1 - 3 hours	Frequent 34 - 66% 3 - 6 hours	Constant 67 - 100% Not restricted
Work Environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Work Meeting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Work Presentation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Work with Customers / Clients	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Work with Medication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Work with Heavy Machinery	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Condition:

/condition **SIGNIFICANTLY** impairs their employment.
Example: a person with Major Depressive Disorder in a role that requires high-level decision making, who may have difficulty concentrating, poor sleep, or severe fatigue.

/condition **MILD to MODERATELY** impairs their employment.
Example: a person with a serious back injury who works seated most of the day, and primarily works at a desk with the hands directly in front of them throughout their shift.

Reasonable Accommodation Section (Examples: assistive equipment, a flexible schedule, etc.)

Is patient? YES or NO If yes, date of follow up: _____

Date: _____

KU MEDICAL CENTER
The University of Kansas

Project
ECHO

THERE IS NO WRONG DOOR

The image displays three overlapping browser windows, each representing a different service. Blue arrows point from text labels to the respective windows:

- VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION** points to the top window, which shows the Kansas Department of Children and Families' Employment Services page.
- KANSASWORKS** points to the middle window, which shows the KANSASWORKS website.
- WORKING HEALTHY** points to the bottom window, which shows the Working Healthy page on the KanCare website.

The bottom window (Working Healthy) is the most prominent and contains the following details:

- Header:** KanCare logo, navigation links (Apply Now, Members, Providers, Data & Policy, Contact Us), and a search icon.
- Left Sidebar:** A menu with the following items: + Help & Resources, - Benefits & Services, - Working Healthy (highlighted), WORK, STEPS, Benefits Specialists, and Program Fact Sheets.
- Main Content:** The title "Working Healthy" is prominently displayed. Below it are links for Font Size (with + and - icons), Share & Bookmark, Feedback, and Print.
- Footer:** The "WORKING HEALTHY" logo, which features three stylized figures in orange, green, and blue, and the text "KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT".

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