

Utilizing Research and Analysis to Evaluate Government Programs

INTRODUCTION



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- Government programs which provide benefits and services for working age persons with disability increasingly emphasize the goal of improving appropriate work participation. The underlying premise is that many persons with disabilities want to work and can/should work.

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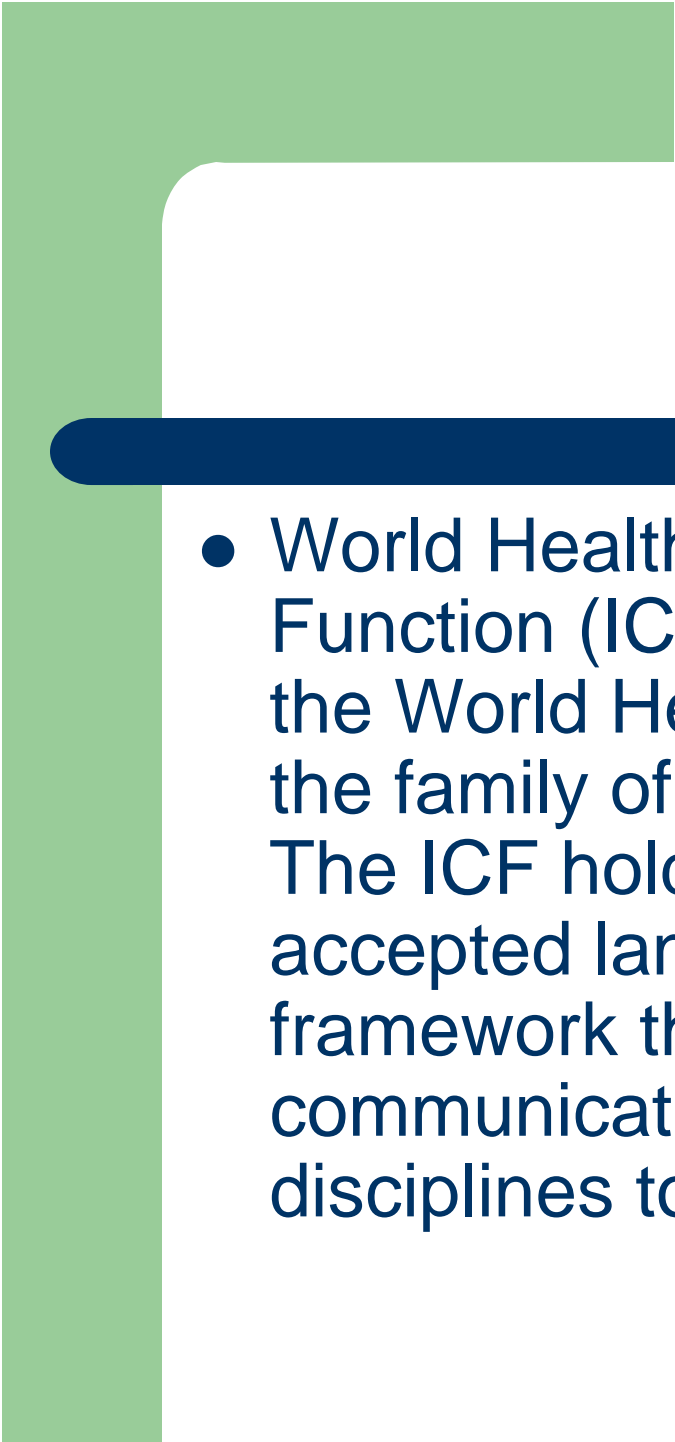

- Many governments are giving added impetus to setting return to work expectations and provided relevant employment services as an adjunct to benefit programs. These efforts reflect the wide acceptance that better management of the individual and economic costs of disability is in everyone's best interest.

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- The growing international effort to assure civil rights protections for persons with disabilities including those pertaining to work is well known and many nations have signed on to the UN charter supporting these rights. Persons with disabilities champion these rights with the independent living movement being an example.

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- Large numbers of working age persons being found eligible for public disability or invalidity benefits with only nominal return to work success with the consequence of which are escalating outlays of government funds. Medical costs have also been increasing.

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- World Health International Classification of Function (ICF) which has been endorsed by the World Health Assembly as a member of the family of International Classifications. The ICF holds promise as an internationally accepted language and conceptual framework that will encourage communication across nations and disciplines to help policies and programs.

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- A primary question in the evaluation of government programs is to what extent can programs improve work outcomes for specific populations.
 - What are the characteristics of successful programs?
 - What are the cost/benefits of these programs?

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We hope to at least partially answer these questions by:

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- A high level descriptive overview and example of US Research and Analysis to Evaluate Government Programs.
- Setting out the methodology and outcomes of three specific government studies.
- Your questions and general discussion of relevant experiences and suggestions for how future government research and analysis can contribute to the furtherance of the goals of increasing work participation of persons with disabilities including expanding the role of ICF.

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- US overview and example
- In the US we have a patch work of federal and state programs which assist persons with disabilities.

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- Each government department or agency evaluates its own programs in terms of meeting specific legal obligations and performance goals in such as benefits paid, services provided, and administrative costs.

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- An example of meaningful and effective research in State WC is your host organization, Ca. Commission on Health, Safety and Workers Compensation. This organization which is appointed by the Governor has commissioned and published research on Ca. WC laws which has been a catalyst for both State and national actions.

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- The Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
 - sets and oversees specific performance expectations.
- The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of congress whose work is to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government.

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- - The Social Security Ticket to Work Program brought into being by the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Act of 1999.
- The program's goals included more consumer choice and expanded availability of service providers to improve beneficiaries' return to work and self sufficiency.

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- SSA was to periodically review the systems used to make payments with the authority to make needed changes and to also provide independent evaluations of the effectiveness of the program.
- A Ticket to Work Advisory Panel was legislatively required to provide advice and reports to SSA, Congress and the President.
- In 2004, the Congress mandated GAO to also evaluate the program by reviewing the reports of SSA, The Advisory Panel and independent researchers to assess the effectiveness and suggest legislative or administrative changes.

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- SSA has made extensive changes in the form of new rules which became effective 7/21/2008. These changes - informed by both internal and external evaluation - include how service providers including State VR agencies are certified and paid, an increase in beneficiaries who were eligible and better alignment with related incentive programs were informed by both internal and external evaluation.

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- The Agency has hired an outside program manager to assist with recruitment and outreach and established a revised long term evaluation plan to determine cost effectiveness as measured by increased beneficiary program participation and success in moving beneficiaries to self sufficiency.

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- SSA has reported promising trends and continues to work with Mathematica Policy Research to conduct ongoing analyses of the program. In the meantime, Congress has also asked GAO to examine a specific area of ticket to work, the reimbursement of employment networks (service providers).

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- Complex programs can require multi-level and ongoing evaluation to assure clear articulation of expected outcomes and whether outcomes for persons served are achieved and are a cost effective expenditure of public funds.

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- It is now my pleasure to turn this over to our other panelists who were previously introduced and whom we are fortunate to have with us. I will remind our panelist of the allotted time frames to assure each has their promised time of 15 minutes and I will let them know when they have 5 minutes remaining to finish up.