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**NASPE: Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Awards Nomination  
Innovative State Human Resources Management Program**

Submission: Consolidation of Disability Management  
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**Program Summary:**

In 2012 the Civil Service Commission realized the opportunity to consolidate the management of operations for FMLA, leaves of absence, and workers compensation (WC) from individual HR Offices to a central Disability Management Office (DMO). The DMO relies on an improved model of service that provides employees with enhanced communication, faster service response, and standard processes that also maintains Departmental Human Resource involvement and discretion.

**Simplified Support for Employees**

In addition to finding educational information and forms on our updated website, State of Michigan employees can now contact the DMO via a toll free number to request a leave of absence or to file a WC claim. After entering basic information into the phone system, employees are connected with the DMO team who leverage Siebel, our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, to create an electronic "case-file" that becomes the single location of record related for their claim. This record maintains all pertinent details of the leave request; date of call(s), case worker name, type of leave, FMLA entitlement, return to work dates, restrictions, etc. This central electronic record also allows anyone on the DMO team to provide support, if needed.

**Workflow Management and Communication**

The new system expedites and automates communication to employees, HR staff, and supervisors throughout the leave. As the leave proceeds through each status (Opened, Approved, Extended, Return to Work with Restrictions, or Closed) a targeted communication is sent to all parties with pertinent instructions or information. This automation keeps all parties informed as status changes and, importantly, makes the communication process clear, standard and familiar.

**Analytics/Reporting**

This new service model also improves our ability to measure and report on the Disability Management process as a whole. Valuable information is now readily available in standard reports and allows us to quantify performance and assess workloads; because we can measure it, we can manage it. We can use objective data to identify immediate business needs, identify trends and to better predict and prepare for the future – while improving our ability to provide

Michigan Civil Service Commission  
Consolidation of Disability Management

better service to employees on leave. Finally, we are also able to help our customer agencies by providing ad hoc reports with key information about their employees' leaves or WC claims, improving their ability to plan and direct resources and better meet their customer needs.

**1. Program Description**

In 2011, the Civil Service Commission proposed the creation of a centralized Disability Management Office (DMO). The DMO would consolidate disability management functions that were being completed throughout the state at an individual agency Human Resource Office level.

The goals of the project included the introduction of CRM technology and process standardization for tasks associated with the administration of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Medical Leaves of Absence, Workers Compensation, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The guiding principles to this project were:

- Improving the overall quality of service to state employees
- Capitalizing on existing call center technology
- Gaining efficiencies in processing
- Providing standardized routine HR processes
- Reducing paper through automation
- Providing compressive tracking and reporting
- Increasing customer communication

**2. How long has this program been operational?**

In December of 2012, HR staff was moved from external agencies to a central location where they officially began processing FMLA, Leave of Absences, Workers Compensation, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recording for the Department of Human Services, one of the largest state agencies. Additional Agencies continue to be migrated to the standardized

process model and by the end of calendar year 2014; the majority of these leaves will be managed using this process.

**3. Why this program was created?**

Prior to the creation of the DMO, each agency maintained compliant, but unique forms, letters, policies, training, personnel, and software to administer the components associated with disability management. This redundancy of processing resulted in inconsistencies in the interpretation of rules, regulations and entitlements. With separate agencies it was difficult to disseminate information, initiate change, or update affected personnel. Utilization of staff to cover disability at each agency varied drastically; often due to variation responsibilities, the type of work performed or the volume of workload. This provided a clear opportunity for process improvement.

Finally, like most states the budgetary costs associated with providing services continue to escalate; we sought a solution that could capitalize on an already existing CRM platform and software while standardizing operations, and gaining efficiencies.

**4. Why is this program a new and creative method?**

Leave of Absence and workers compensation processing is typically a highly manual, paper driven process that is completed at each HR agency level. Rather than seeking to make minor process changes at every agency, the decision was made to find a more universal solution that leveraged available technology,

aligned with our strategic goals and that had with long range and broad improvement.

The process was fast-tracked using a team discovery approach, having HR directors and their staffs compile recommendations. Costs were significantly reduced by leveraging the customer relationship management (CRM) technology that was already in place in the MI HR Call Center.

**5. What were the program's startup costs?**

The major costs for this project were incurred upfront, working with our third party vendor (Accenture) on project design, development, and integrating disability management into an existing CRM infrastructure. In addition there were costs associated in reconfiguration of telephony, set-up of work space, testing, and training.

**6. What are the programs operational costs?**

Staffing and ongoing technical support.

**7. How is this program funded?**

This program is included within the Civil Service operational budget

**8. Did this program originate in your state?**

Yes.

**9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states?**

Not to our knowledge. Michigan has continually looked for ways to consolidate services and processes.

**10. How do you measure the success of this program?**

Michigan Civil Service Commission  
Consolidation of Disability Management

First and most importantly, we measure our success by providing a less stressful, more effective and better communication experience that helps employees successfully navigate the FMLA, WC and leave of absence process.

We also quantify our success by referencing the improved technology and metrics now available to us; these provide clear, accurate measurable time lines for processing leave and WC applications. We measure our quality by auditing files to ensure that leaves align with Civil Service rules and regulations, FMLA regulations, and union contractual entitlement. We measure achievement by the feedback provided by HR Directors, employees and supervisors that are all customers of the DMO.

Although a reduction in staffing and cost was not the main driving factor of this project; we have eliminated process redundancies, reduced staff and are able to more effectively utilize staff to cover workloads.

**11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?**

At inception the DMO opened its doors to service the Department of Human Services and its 11,372 employees. Gradually, we have added eleven additional agencies for a total of 18,708 employees and plan on adding another three agencies before the end of calendar year 2015.