

# Leveraging Physical Therapy as a Musculoskeletal Solution

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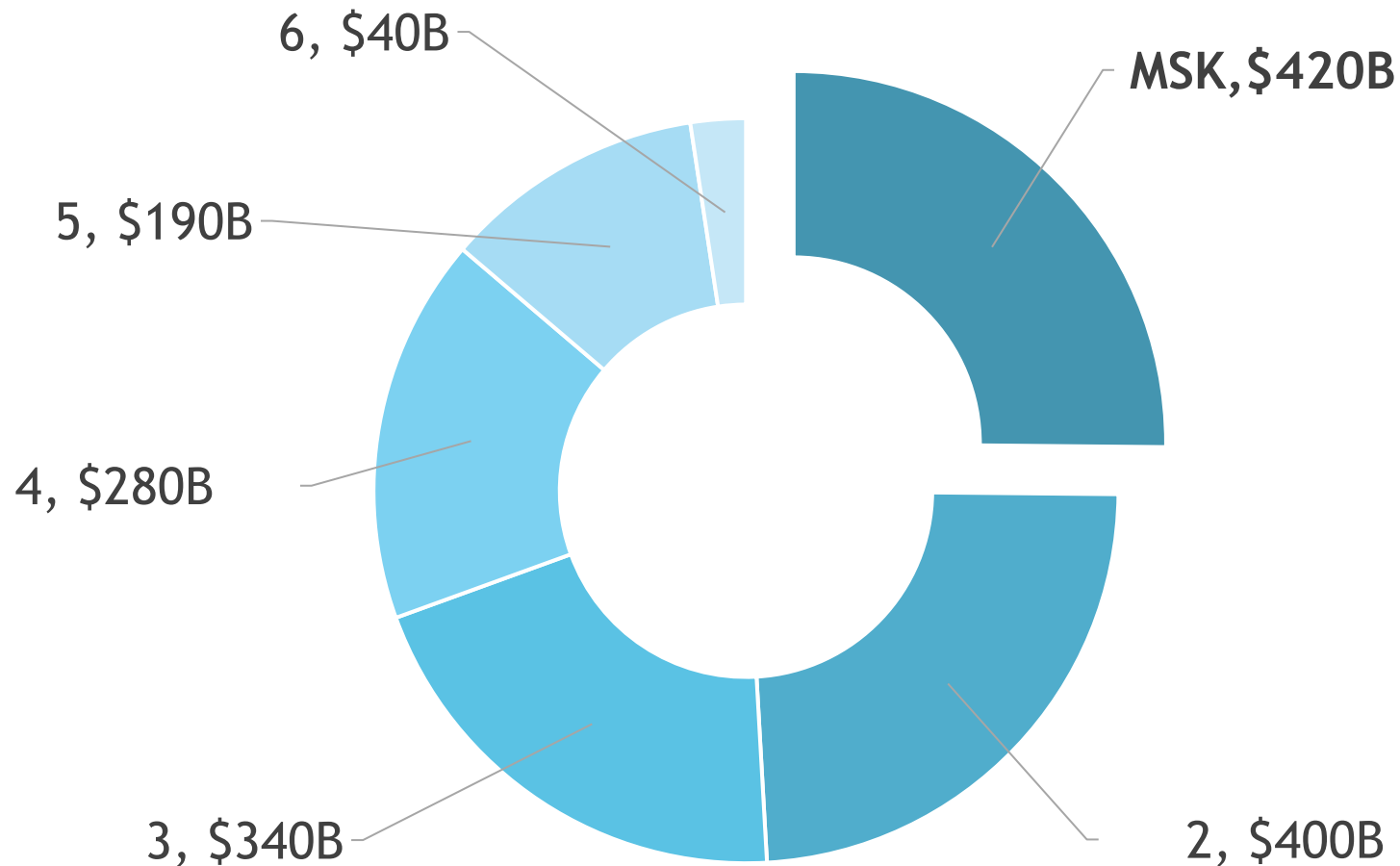
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# MSK: A Top Healthcare Cost Driver for Employers



- 1 in 2 adults with MSK conditions
- MSK conditions accounted for 1/3 of patient volume across all medical conditions
- 63% of MSK conditions may be addressed with conservative care.

# Physical Therapist (PT) Background/IN Law

- PT may treat without referral for 42 days in IN
- Doctorate Degree
  - Experts in diagnosing and treating MSK conditions.
- Advanced Specialist Certification

<https://specialization.apta.org/find-a-specialist>
- Occupational Health Practitioner Certificate
- Direct to Employer Certificates



# How to assess if a PT program is a potential MSK solution?

- Is MSK spend a top diagnostic cost driver?
- Are incidence rates of MSK conditions higher than benchmarks?
- Is cost associated with MSK spend greater than benchmarks?
- Are there high work related MSK claims?
- Do you have a high MSK surgical incidence and/or spend?



# How to Mitigate Costs with Physical Therapy?

1

Prevention  
and Wellness  
Program

2

Early Symptom  
and Evidenced  
Based  
Management

3

Plan  
Design

4

Partnering with  
High Value  
Providers

# How to Mitigate Costs with Physical Therapy?

1

- Reduce risk of injury
- Minimize engagement in the healthcare system
- Reduce direct/indirect costs associated with musculoskeletal injury.

Prevention  
and Wellness  
Program



# How to Mitigate Costs with Physical Therapy?

2

Early &  
Evidenced  
Based  
Symptom  
Management

## Decreased Downstream Healthcare costs with:

- Early access to PT within days to weeks of symptom onset or injury
- Direct PT vs MD referral
- Evidenced Based Care adherent to Clinical Practice Guidelines

Fritz, JM Primary care referral of patients with low back pain to physical therapy: impact on future healthcare utilization and costs. Spine 25 2114-21

Better Outcomes Associated with Early Physical Therapy for Injured Workers with Low Back Pain, WCRI Study | WCRI ([wcrinet.org](http://wcrinet.org))

Pendergast J et al. A comparison of health care use for physician-referred and self-referred episodes of outpatient physical therapy. Health Serv Res. 2012 Apr;47(2):633-54. doi: 10.1111/j.1475-6773.2011.01324.x. Epub 2011 Sep 23.

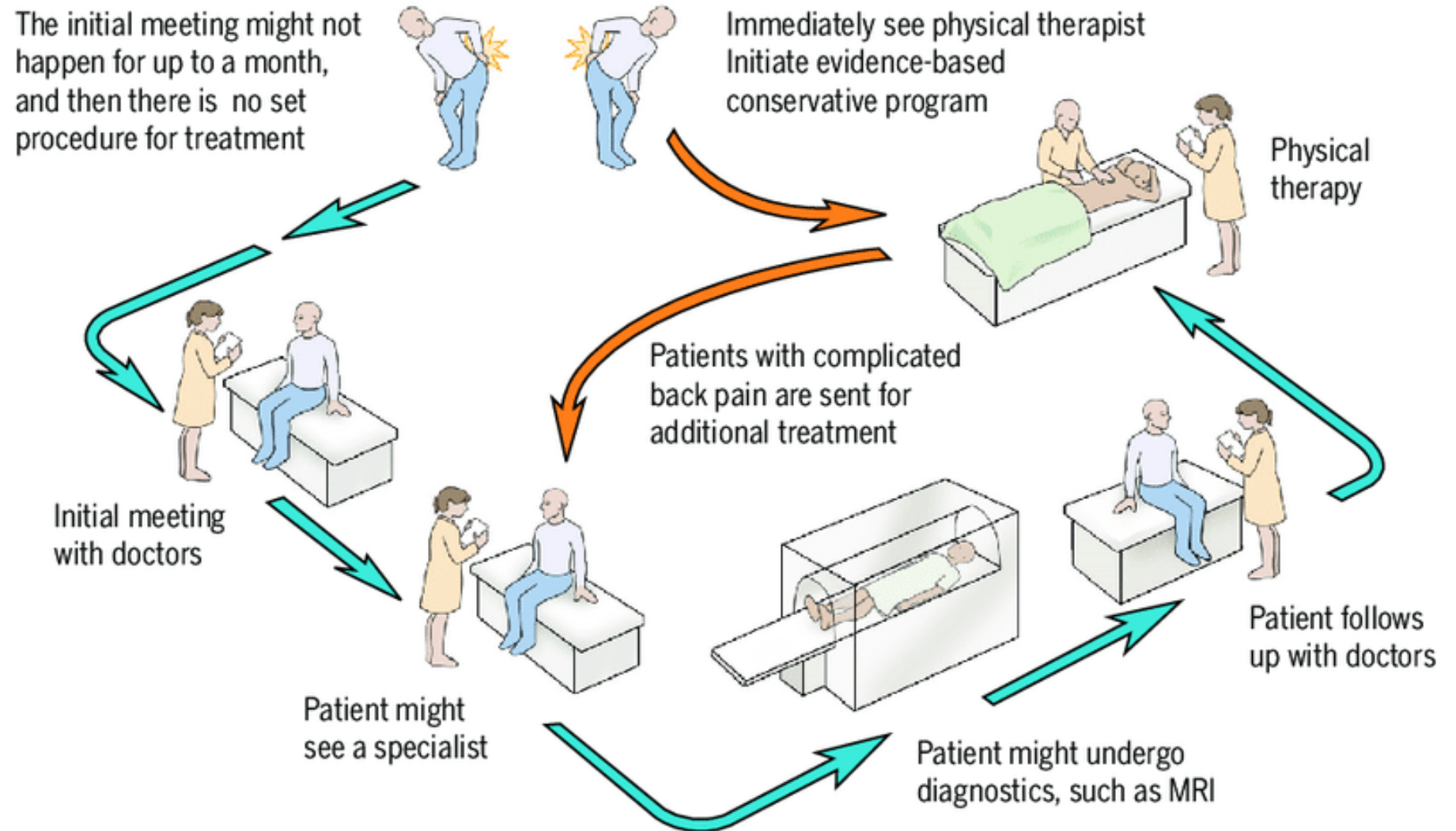
Fritz JM et al. Physical therapy for acute low back pain: associations with subsequent healthcare costs. Spine (Phila Ps 1976) 2008 Jul 15;33(16):1800-5. [Physical therapy for acute low back pain: associations with subsequent healthcare costs - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

# Traditional Pathway vs Evidence-Based, Value Stream Approach

## Virginia Mason Medical Center and Aetna Study

### Value Stream To Traditional Results

- >50% Total Cost Savings (\$900 vs \$2100)
- 1 day vs 31 days to see treating provider
- MRI utilization 6% vs 42%
- 94% of patients did not miss work
- ↓ prescription medication by 73%





# How to Mitigate Costs with Physical Therapy?

3

Plan  
Design

## Plan Design Impacts Early Access to Care

- Out of pocket costs drive patient preference for conservative care
- Cost sharing policies do not consistently align with clinical practice guidelines.
- Greater restrictions on provider choice decreases choice of conservative therapy

32%  
higher

for PPO patients

16%  
lower

for EPO patients

19%  
lower

for patients with  
\$1001-\$1500 deductible

29%  
lower

for patients with  
>\$30 co-pay

# How to Mitigate Costs with Physical Therapy?

4

Partnering with  
High Value  
Providers/Direct  
Contracting





# Domtar Paper Hawesville, KY



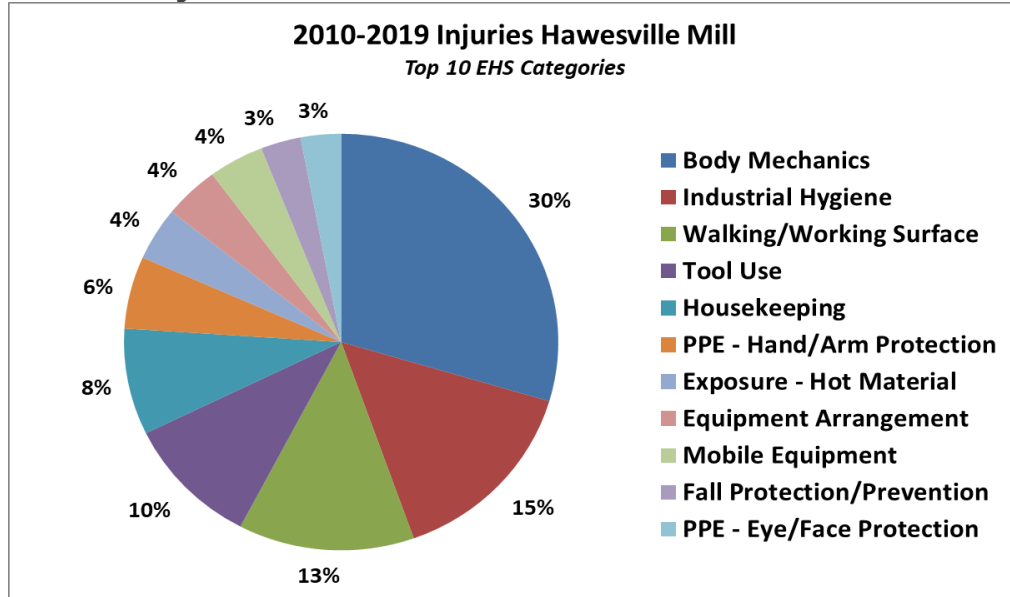
- ▶ 435 employees
- ▶ Produce uncoated free sheet paper (copy & printer paper)
- ▶ Highly Technical Work
- ▶ Recipient of KY Governor's Safety Award in 2016, 2018, 2021

# MSK: A Healthcare Cost Driver: Domtar's Opportunity/Challenge

- ▶ We seek sustainability as an organization in our processes and impact on the environment
- ▶ Our people . . .
  - ▶ Are a finite resource
  - ▶ Hold the knowledge and experience that makes Domtar a leader in the industry
  - ▶ Are the biggest investment of the organization
- ▶ Their sustainability is paramount to the long-term success of our organization

# MSK: A Healthcare Cost Driver: Domtar's Opportunity/Challenge

## Analytics

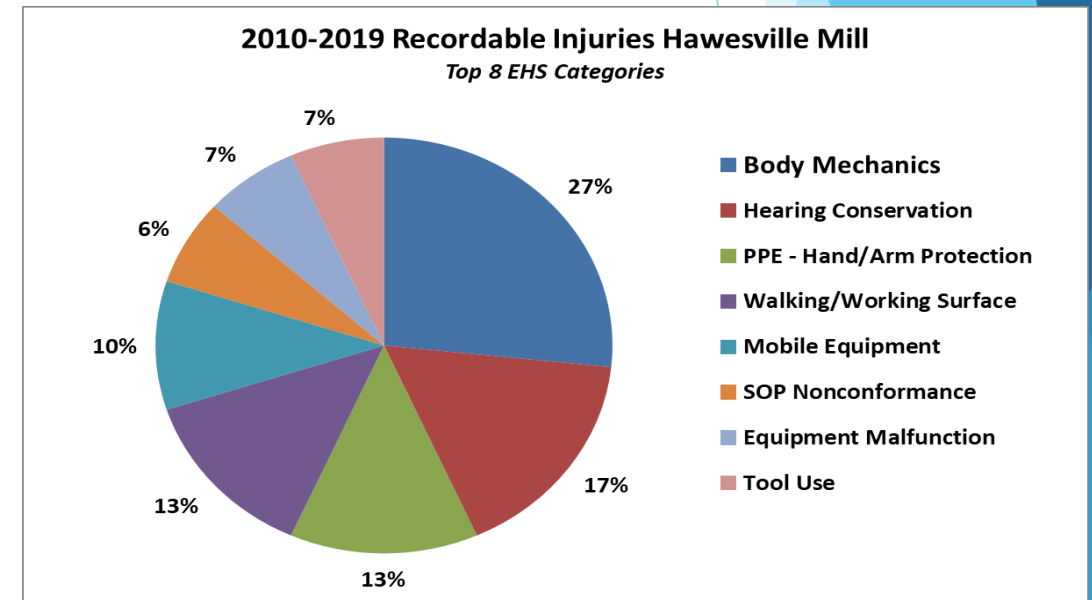


## Follow-up

- ▶ What do we know about the Body Mechanics (MSK Injuries) of our work?
- ▶ Understanding that we did not know enough about the physical demands of the jobs.

## 2014

- ▶ 2-yr Joint USW/Domtar Safety Planning Meeting
- ▶ Data first presented



Body Mechanics (MSK Injuries) is/are the leading injury category.

# Comprehensive Approach for Management of MSK

- ▶ Initial approach was to focus on MSK injury on work injury side
- ▶ Realized through engagement with workforce on work injury prevention side:
  - ▶ Non-work related MSK injuries were prevalent
    - ▶ Loss of Productivity/Absenteeism
    - ▶ Plan Member MSK issues have the potential to “spill” over into work related injuries
  - ▶ Removing barriers from accessing early MSK care for plan members was critical
  - ▶ Offering an opportunity for employees to maintain MSK health and wellness was needed

# Comprehensive Approach for Management and Prevention of MSK

- ▶ Employees identified barriers that prevented accessing early MSK care for plan members
  - ▶ Resources needed to be convenient and close
  - ▶ Employees time is valuable and having to attend ongoing medical appointments was not desirable
  - ▶ Conservative care was often not desired because of the time away from work required
  - ▶ Cost of medical services was a deterrent (co-pays and deductibles)

# Why did Domtar choose ARI as their PT Provider?

- ▶ Quick response time for MSK injury
- ▶ Expertise in work environment assessment and innovative solutions
- ▶ Flexibility to meet Domtar scheduling needs
- ▶ Onsite PT could provide services to treat work comp and medical plan member cases
- ▶ All forms of PT treatments could be provided based on case needs.
- ▶ Familiar with outside quality medical providers and could provide recommendations/referral if conservative care failed.

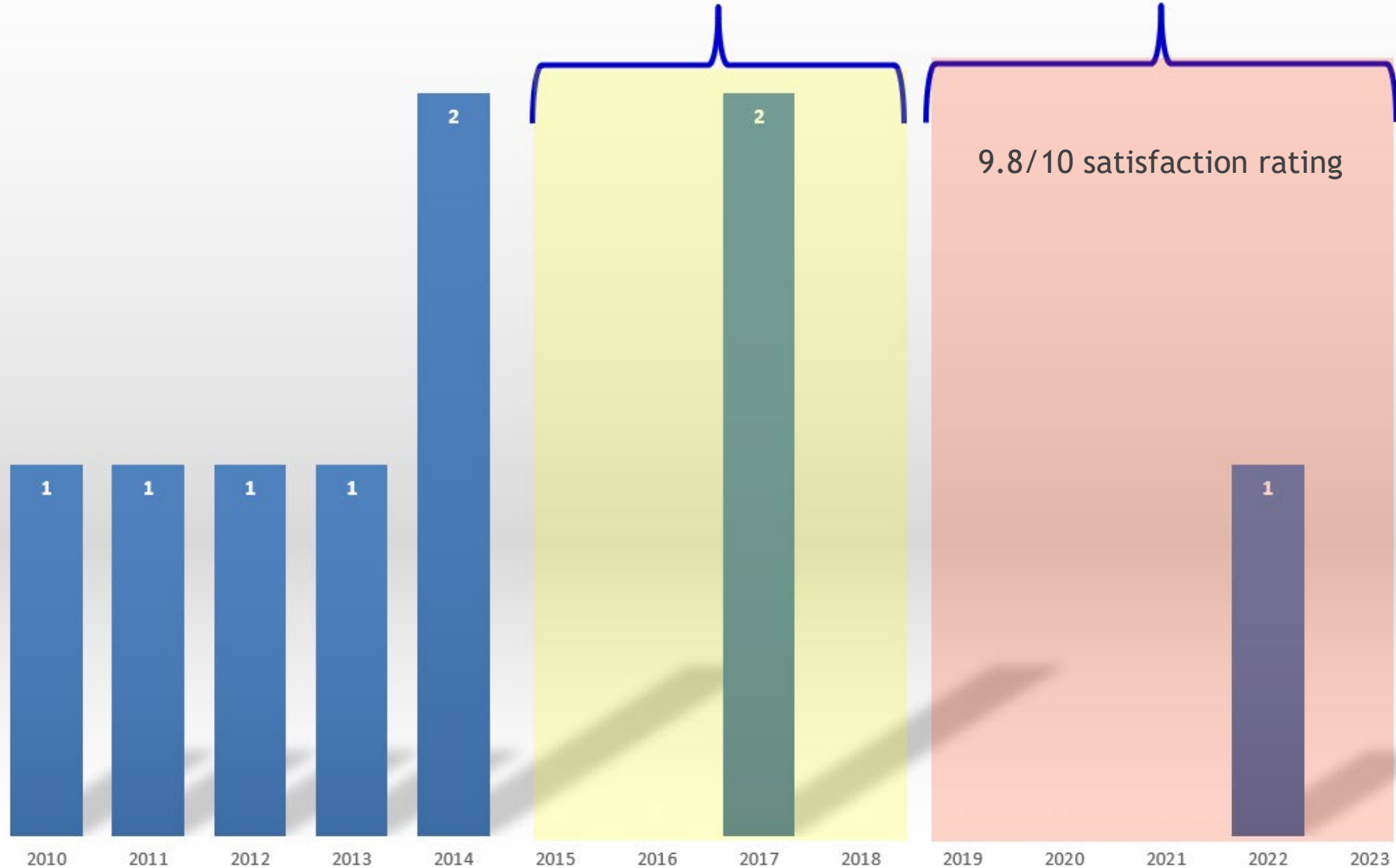


# Domtar Results

Recordable Injuries

Work Assessment Phase

Early Intervention  
(Boby Mechanics Center)



# Domtar Keys to Success

- ▶ Management Support
- ▶ Assessment of current MSK injury
  - ▶ Metrics (quantitative)
  - ▶ Engagement with workforce (qualitative)
- ▶ Education of workforce with regards to MSK injuries and available resources
- ▶ Stress early intervention and action for MSK symptoms and injuries

# 1

## Prevention and Wellness Program

# Domtar Prevention and Wellness Program

- ✓ • **Ergonomic Analysis/Job Description Development**
  - Industrial Ergonomics
  - Office Ergonomics
- ✓ • **Job Function Matching**
  - Return to Work (Fit for Duty) Testing
  - Stay at Work (Fit for Duty) Testing
- ✓ • **Pre-Work Stretching Programs**
- ✓ • **Employee MSK Prevention Training**
  - Body Mechanics
  - Ergonomic Awareness
  - Job Task Specific
- ✓ • **Wellness Programs**
  - Screens through Onsite Clinic (Wellness initiative)

# 2

Early &  
Evidenced  
Based  
Symptom  
Management

## Domtar Early & Evidenced Based Symptom Management

- ▶ Onsite PT clinic for employees (Direct Access)
  - Early Intervention Work Related (First Aid Level)
    - Awareness of OSHA recordability standards
  - Employee Plan Member (Non-Work Related) Treatment
  - Work Related Treatment



# 3

## Plan Design

# Plan Design Considerations

### ▶ Cost Structure

- ▶ Per Visit
- ▶ Per Hour ✓
- ▶ Capitation
- ▶ Fee Schedule

### ▶ Targets

- ▶ Hybrid ✓
  - ▶ Work Related Injuries (WC insurance)
  - ▶ Non-Work Related (Group Health Plan)
- ▶ Employees only ✓
- ▶ All plan members

### ▶ Plan Goals

- ▶ Reduce Obstacles (No employee cost & convenience) ✓



# 3

## Plan Design

# Domtar Clinic Specifics

- Fully functional PT clinic offering a variety of treatment options
- Built within fitness center for transitioning from PT to wellness
- Convenient access 10 hrs/wk
- No insurance paperwork
- Clinic at workplace (no travel)
- PT's familiar with employees work demands
- Employees access outside work hours for NWR





# Domtar Evidenced Based MSK Outcomes

## Early Intervention Outcomes:

- ▶ Colleagues are finding between 85%-95% resolution of early work related MSK symptoms through early intervention services (first aid level care).

## Onsite PT clinic Outcomes:

- ▶ Clinic Data (March 2019 through Dec 2022)
  - 193 patients (97% non-work MSK)
  - 1490 visits
  - Covid closed for 10 months (3 years, 2 months open)
- ▶ Up to 53% reduction in cost per visit vs outside PT provider
- ▶ FOTO outcome reporting indicates Domtar onsite clinic in top 5% for functional improvement scores across clinics.
- ▶ FOTO also indicates Domtar onsite clinic averaging about 3.5 visits less to treat a given condition compared to norm
- ▶ WHY.....?

Questions?