



United Kingdom adopts NIDMAR's DM protocol



Front from left: Elaine Cook, Open Door manager, UnumProvident; Joy Reymond, head of vocational rehabilitation services, UnumProvident; Eliana Victor, division of vocational rehabilitation, AVAPE (Brazil); Mairead Conroy, regional coordinator, Gandon Enterprises (Ireland) and Wolfgang Zimmermann, executive director, NIDMAR.

Back row, from left: Dr. Friedrich Mehrhoff, head of department of rehabilitation and international relations, HVBG (Germany); Marcia Cumper, rehabilitation key account manager, UnumProvident; Terry Fahy, project director, Gandon Enterprises; Sue Rowlands, rehabilitation services manager, UnumProvident; Carole Keith, rehabilitation services manager, UnumProvident; Sylvia Cury, CEO, AVAPE; Mariana Lorca, international relations unit, AVAPE; Kimberly Fitzgerald, employee assistance coordinator, Gandon Enterprises; Joyce Gravelle, assistant executive director, NIDMAR; Graham Halsey, rehabilitation services manager, UnumProvident.

LONDON: UnumProvident, the United Kingdom's leading disability insurer, recently adopted NIDMAR's entire disability management protocol, which comprises the consensus based audit tool, disability management curriculum and professional designations.

"Our plan for the curriculum is to offer it through our UnumProvident Centre for Psychosocial and Disability Research at Cardiff University," says Joy Reymond, head of vocational rehabilitation services for UnumProvident.

"There is a long history of vocational rehabilitation in the UK, but specific professional training in the area has traditionally been very difficult to obtain," says Reymond. "With the increased focus on rehabilitation and return to work, providers and purchasers of vocational rehabilitation are beginning to look for vocational rehabilitation practitioners to have specific expertise and training in this field. UnumProvident very much supports this development and by bringing the NIDMAR DM curriculum into the UK, we hope to offer a programme of significant value to all partners in the vocational rehabilitation field. We recognize that the program will need to be adapted to the UK's social, legislative and employment environment and this will be our first step."

Despite improvements in most objective measures of health in the UK, levels of disability and health-related work absence continue to increase. This unfortunate statistic is one reason why the time is right for an internationally recognized standard to be adopted there.

"One of the compelling reasons for adopting both the curriculum and the audit was that it's an internationally standardized tool recognized in multiple jurisdictions," says Reymond.

Continued on page 2

The UK joins Ireland and Germany as the latest in the growing list of European jurisdictions in which the protocol has been adopted.

“We’re very fortunate that Ireland is independently taking up all three initiatives,” adds Reymond. “It will help the professions in both countries that we’re working together to adapt the curriculum and audit to our national needs.”

This spirit of collaboration extends to the continent, as UnumProvident has already begun to share information with Germany, which has a long history of excellence in disability management.

In fact, representatives from the UK, Germany, Ireland, Brazil and NIDMAR gathered in London at the end of November for an information exchange.

“Germany has more than 300 certified disability management professionals after just two years of providing the training, so obviously we can learn a lot from their success,” says Reymond. “We will be reviewing their implementation and delivery programs in February 2006, and this will inform the development of our own program in the UK.”

UnumProvident expects to undertake its first audit in December, after which they will meet again with representatives from Irish-based Gandon Enterprises to debrief and share their experiences. Such collaboration is expected to be more and more common as the disability management protocol continues to be adopted around the world. ■