

AMERICAN REHABILITATION ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION

THE ONLY INTERNATIONAL CERTIFYING BODY IN LOSS ASSESSMENT



SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY PANEL (OIDAP) ANNOUNCES INITIAL REPORT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

On Tuesday, October 20, 2009, the Occupational Information Development Advisory Panel's (OIDAP) initial report of recommendations to Social Security Administration (SSA) Commissioner Michael J. Astrue, was posted to the panel's website (see **Special Points of Interest** on this page for the link to the document). Included in this report are the initial set of recommendations regarding the content model and classification structure for an occupational information system that would replace the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (D.O.T.). The D.O.T. has served as a primary reference in the SSA disability adjudication process, since the mid-1960's.

This 750-page report is both extensive and detailed in its coverage of the needs for a new and better replacement for the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, which has served as the primary resource for determining if individuals who have become impaired due to injury or illness can work within the United States labor market, since the adjudication process for determining eligibility based on disability became a reality in the 1960's.

Current data included in the database have not been updated by the U.S. Department of Labor, since the D.O.T.'s last publication in 1992. Development and implementation of the O*NET, did not result in its being adopted for use within the SSA adjudication process, due to many changes that

took place in how data was collected, categorized, reported, and linked to other pertinent labor market information.

The OIDAP's work has been ongoing and intense since it first was established in late 2008. An extensive number of public information gathering sessions and forums have been held prior to the release of this initial report to SSA Commissioner Astrue. Many more meetings are continuing to be conducted as this monumental task continues – to formulate a better model of occupational data collection, categorization, implementation and maintenance, which promises to provide better occupational information of benefit in many settings, well beyond being applied solely within the SSA adjudication process.

Many professional disciplines and organizations have been actively involved in providing the OIDAP with input pertinent to the assessment and employment of people who have been significantly impacted by disabilities, many of which also provide forensic vocational rehabilitation expert opinion and consultation in the breadth of disability litigation venues.

The work of the OIDAP and many others in improving key occupational information data resources should be applauded for undertaking this monumental effort, as their efforts hold tremendous promise for improvement in direct services and forensic expert opinion dealing with the impact of disability on

individuals within the U.S. within the foreseeable future.

As we enter into late Fall and early Winter, I would encourage each of you to find a nice cozy chair, a warm blanket, light the logs in your fireplace, and grab a hot chocolate, as you read over this first report of the OIDAP and consider its recommendations (the link to the full-text report is located on the lower left-hand side of this page). I'm sure that you will find it to be one which is mentally challenging and will, no doubt, generate many topics for discussion during our upcoming professional gatherings, as the foundation for new research efforts and the articles that will be produced in our numerous professional journals, and will present new challenges in providing relevant and effective training for both new and also established members of our profession.

Congratulations and a hearty thank you to the members of the OIDAP and its sub-committees, the Social Security Administration, and to the many individuals and professional groups who have participated in and continue to work to improve the occupational tools that we use, so that we may all be able to provide better results in providing people with disabilities with the employment and supports that they duly deserve.

The full website for the OIDAP is located at: <http://www.ssa.gov/oidap>

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The **Occupational Information Development Advisory Panel's report to Commissioner Astrue**, with the first set of recommendations for the content model and classification for an occupational information systems to replace the Dictionary of Occupational Titles in the SSA disability adjudication process, is available online at: <http://www.ssa.gov/oidap/Documents/Occupational%20Information%20Development%20Advisory%20Panel.pdf>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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It is with great pleasure that I begin to serve a term as President of AREA for 2009-2010 year. Since joining in 1994, I have had the opportunity to watch AREA grow to become a bellwether for bringing together those disciplines that combine to make the forensic arena – vocational/rehabilitation experts, life-care planners and forensic economists. Through such relationships and professional dialogues, occupationally disabled individuals are better served in determining the impact of injury for purposes of trial.



This year's annual conference was held from June 11-12, 2009, at the historic Ambassador East Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. As has been the case for the last two years, the conference was comprised of two components—a Pre-Conference Boot Camp ("Determining Personal Damages 201") and the Annual Conference. The Boot Camp is designed to provide continuing education and university graduate credit. A record 49 registrants attended this year's Boot Camp.

The Annual Conference was held on June 12-14, 2009, and covered such topics as functional capacity evaluations, hedonic damages, and analysis of a FELA case from a legal, vocational and economic perspective. Fifty-two registrants—again, a new high—attended and evaluations indicated the sessions were both timely and informative.

At this year's conference, two new Board members were elected: Kent Jayne, Vice President of Internal Affairs; and Gerald Schneck, Vice President of External Affairs. We are grateful for the services of these members.

As we enter our 21st year as an organization, it is important that we continue to move forward with the same energy and enthusiasm that has brought us to where we are today. To maintain this level of excellence, we must prioritize the importance of membership. First, as is always the case, each of us

must search our list of professional contacts and make efforts to introduce them to the uniqueness of AREA.

Secondly, we must develop leaders internally if we are to sustain our mission. Each member has an obligation to contribute to our strength.

Let us all consider our roles and opportunities in being a member—present a manuscript for *The Earnings Analyst* or become involved with AREA's Board of Directors.

In closing, I look forward to serving you as President. If you have any concerns, interests, or suggestions, please contact me at rdurgin@coinedu.com or (888) 626-2898.

Rod W. Durgin, Ph.D. - President, AREA

ARTICLES OF INTEREST FROM THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS: MONTHLY LABOR REVIEW ONLINE

What do OES data have to say about increasing wage inequality? *Wage distribution data from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey indicate that wages became more dispersed over the 2002-2008 period; occupations paying higher wages tended to have workers with more education and higher level technical skills, while occupations paying lower wages tended to have workers with less education and low skills.*

John I. Jones, Economist, Division of Publications and Analysis, Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review Online, June 2009, 132(6), pp. 39-49.

Link to this Article: <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2009/06/art3full.pdf>

Measuring time spent in unpaid household work: results from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS): *Time-use data show that on average Americans spend more than 20 hours per week working for their own household without pay on tasks that might be done by a paid worker; women spend more time at such unpaid household work.*

Rachel Krantz-Kent, Economist, Division of Labor Force Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Monthly Labor Review Online, July 2009, 32(7), pp. 46-59.

Link to this Article: <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2009/07/art3full.pdf>

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CONFERENCE CALENDAR

October 28-31, 2009

International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP)
2009 Forensics Conference
Doubletree Hotel—Downtown Memphis
Memphis, TN

November 21-23, 2009

Southern Economic Association (SEA)
79th Annual Meeting
Marriott San Antonio Rivercenter
San Antonio, TX

January 3-5, 2010

Allied Social Science Associations
Atlanta, GA

January 5-7, 2010

American Economic Association
2010 Continuing Education Conference
Atlanta, GA

February 11-13, 2010

International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP)
2010 Case Management/Disability Management Conference
Doubletree Paradise Valley Resort
Scottsdale, AZ

February 26-28, 2010

Eastern Economic Association (EEA)
Loew's Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA

March 26-28, 2010

American Board of Vocational Experts (ABVE)
2010 Spring Conference
Town & Country Resort
San Diego, CA

CORRECTION: June 17-20, 2010**American Rehabilitation Economics Association (AREA) Annual Conference**

Pre-Conference Sessions: Thursday, June 17th — Friday, June 18th

Main Conference Sessions: Friday, June 18th — Sunday, June 20th

Ambassador East Hotel
Chicago, IL

June 29–July 3, 2010

Western Economic Association (WEA)
85th Annual Conference
Portland, OR

September 15, 2010

American Economic Association (AEA)
2010 Annual Meeting
Atlanta, GA

**Save
the
Date!**

AREA

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ARTICLES OF INTEREST FROM THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS: MONTHLY LABOR REVIEW ONLINE

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Leisure and illness leave: estimating benefits in combination

The National Compensation Survey (NCS) collects data on employee access to individual paid-leave benefits, allowing economists to estimate the incidence of specific benefit programs; but when benefits can be used interchangeably, it is also useful to create and analyze combinations of benefits.

Iris S. Diaz, Economist, Office of Compensation and Working Conditions, Bureau of Labor Statistics,

and

Richard Wallick, Economist, Office of Compensation and Working Conditions, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Monthly Labor Review Online, February 2009, 132(2), pp. 28-34.

Link to this Article:

http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2009/02/art3full.pdf

How shifting occupational composition has affected the real average wage

OES data from 2002-2007 reveal that an overall shift in employment towards occupations with lower mean wages hindered growth in the U.S. real average wage and that wage growth was concentrated in higher paying occupations; the data also show a shift in employment from the middle-paying occupations to the highest and lowest paying occupations.

Rebecca Keller, Economist, Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Monthly Labor Review Online, June 2009, 132(6), pp. 26-38.

Link to this Article:

http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2009/06/art2full.pdf

American Time Use Survey (ATUS) - 2008 Results

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor released the 2008 results from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) on June 24, 2009.

This annual release of ATUS data focuses on the average amount of time per day in 2008 that individuals worked, did household activities, cared for household children, participated in educational activities, and engaged in leisure and sports activities. It also includes measures of the average time per day spent providing childcare - both as a primary (or main) activity and while doing other things - for the combined years 2004-08. Except for childcare, activities done simultaneously with primary activities were not collected.

Link to the ATUS: http://www.bls.gov/tus/

ABOUT AREA

Established in 1989, AREA has pursued two missions: bringing recognition to the combined use of vocational rehabilitation and economic loss assessment as a distinct discipline, and providing a peer-exchange forum for vocational, economic and rehabilitation experts who practice within this growing field.

AREA supports professional growth by offering opportunities for continuing education and university credit at its Annual Conference. AREA also participates in conference sessions held with other vocational, economic and rehabilitation organizations to encourage the sharing of knowledge among related forensic professionals.

Currently, AREA is the only international certifying body that has the unique blend of professions in loss assessment. Additionally, it is the first to establish a Registry of both Forensic Vocational and Forensic Economic Experts.

As forensic experts, AREA members offer opinion and testimony in a wide variety of cases. Often they involve some type of injury, which has resulted in an alleged loss of earnings or loss of earning capacity.

Our role is to determine the nature and extent of any loss, from a vocational and/or economic perspective. This, in turn, helps the Court in its assessment of damages.

Vocational experts identify what the person could have earned prior to the incident, compared to what they are likely to earn following the incident. Economic experts calculate the value of those earnings over time, so the difference, if any, between the two income streams is clearly understood. Those who act as vocational/economic experts blend the two disciplines, and offer testimony in both arenas.