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**JAN**

**MONTHLY WEBCAST SERIES**

**FEBRUARY 11, 2020**

**1:45 P.M. ET**

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 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Hello everyone and welcome to the Job Accommodation Network's accommodation and compliance audio and Web Training Series. I'm Linda Batiste and I'm here with Beth Loy.

 >> BETH LOY: Well, hello, everyone.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Beth and I will be presenting today's program called "Current Events in Accommodation". But before we get started, I want to go over just a few housekeeping items.

 First if any of you experience technical difficulties during the webcast, please give us a call at 800-526-7234 for voice, hit button 5. Or for TTY call 877-781-9403.

 Second, toward the end of the presentation we'll have a question and answer period, time allowing. But you can send your questions in at any time during the webcast to our email account, question@askJAN.org or you can use our question and answer pod located at the bottom of your screen to use that pod just type your question and then submit to the question queue. Also on the bottom of your screen you'll notice a FileShare pod if you have any difficulty viewing the slides or just want to download them click on the button that says save to my computer. You can also download the resource handout that we put together for you. And finally, I want to remind you at the end of the webcast an evaluation will automatically pop up in your screen in another window. We really appreciate your feedback so please stay logged onto fill out that evaluation form. And now let's start today's program.

 We have lots of exciting news to report to you today starting on the home front. One of the most exciting things is on July 26th of this year the ADA will celebrate its 30th anniversary.

 A lot of you may not know that JAN is even older than the ADA. We've been around for over 35 years. So we've had the opportunity to watch the ADA evolve since the very beginning. We're going to be celebrating the ADA's anniversary all year as will our funder, the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy or ODEP for short to follow all of owe don't's activities you can bookmark their ADA anniversary page which is DOL.gov/ODEP/topics/ADA.html and also watch our Website which is askJAN.org to find out what we'll be doing. Here to talk -- we'll talk more about the ADA later but first on the home front we had a busy year again in 2019 we handled over 44,000 contacts mostly from employers and individuals with disabilities and we're on track to surpass that number this year. Many of our contacts are taking advantage of all of the different ways to reach us. Half the contacts came in what is now the old-fashioned way via our toll free telephone line but the other came in electronically through the email account online tool called JAN on Demand our live chat and social network account such as Facebook Second Life and Twitter. Our Website remained popular too in the last year we received over 21.5 million page requests and now I want to mention some things we added to our site that we think you might be interested in.

 First up is our series of videos that we call Solution Showcase videos. These are two to four-minute long and describe or show how various accommodation solutions work. Currently there are videos about SmartPhone pens, Speech Recognition Software, telephone amplification, CART or captioning services, Microsoft and iPad built-in accessibility features and alternative mice. In the near future we're going to be adding videos about ergonomic chairs, sit/stand workstations, accessing telephones if you use hearing aids and color coding as an accommodation.

 These videos are designed to help you understand how various services and assistive technologies work so you can explore accommodation options in your workplace and we're going to continue adding to these videos periodically.

 The other videos we have are called the just-in-time training videos that highlight various disability-related issues that can come up in the workplace offering practical solutions for addressing each issue. So far we have videos about interviewing a young person on the autism spectrum. Managing an accommodation request from a Veteran with a hearing impairment and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Managing an accommodation that surfaces during a performance review. Retaining an individual with a chronic health condition. Hiring an individual with an anxiety disorder resulting in a stutter. Returning on employee with a back injury to work and dealing with conduct and drug addiction in the workplace. And in the near future we'll be adding videos for individuals with disabilities, specifically about disclosing a disability and requesting accommodations.

 And all of the videos I have mentioned are free and they are available for download any time you need them so feel free to check them out. We provided a link directly to them on your resource handout.

 I also wanted to mention a few other things that we added to our site last year including a page on telework as an accommodation. Leave as an accommodation. Information for caregivers. And a training module about service and emotional support animals as workplace accommodations. We were getting a lot of questions about all of these issues so we put together some information based on these most frequent questions that we get. You can find all this and more on our A to Z page, which you can find right off our homepage.

 And then the final thing I want to mention that's coming soon is My JAN. We're really excited about this addition and basically it's a way that you can customize and save your own webpage with your favorite JAN pages so My JAN will allow you to easily load pages with links to things on the JAN site you use a lot or you just want to have handy when you do need them. You'll be able to arrange your links whether they are related to accommodations, legal issues or resources. I'm really excited about this addition because I use the JAN site all the time in my day-to-day work and I currently bring up ten tabs every morning when I get here with the pages I know I'll need every day so My JAN will let me access all of these pages easily from one customized page so if you think this is going to be useful for you watch for this to be available this year, right, Beth hopefully?

 >> BETH LOY: Yes and this is going to be a really cool addition because people will just have to bookmark the JAN site so they will only have one page in their bookmarks so once they go to the JAN site and log into their My JAN page all of their JAN related bookmarks will be on one page.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: I'm going to be the first customer.

 >> BETH LOY: Yeah, it's going to make it so much easier for people who do a lot of accommodations.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Definitely it will make it easier for us here.

 >> BETH LOY: Very excited about it.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: All right on the home front these are definitely exciting times for us so stay tuned to the JAN Website at askJAN.org and now Beth with the cost benefits report.

 >> BETH LOY: Thank you in this section we like to look into the costs and benefits of workplace accommodation this is the business side of implementing the ADA and Rehabilitation Act. And we do a study here at JAN. Once a year we like to share those findings with you we usually do it during our Current Events Webcast it's a study that shows that workplace accommodations are not only low cost but also, guess what, they are high impact.

 So they positively impact the workplace in many ways. Now we collect data from four different groups, employers, professionals, such as service providers, individuals, and those related to self-employment.

 So what happens here is the cost-benefit data are often usually available from just employers which is why we analyze these data for the costs and benefits of accommodation on a yearly basis and this JAN study we have been doing it since 2004 so we feel we have a pretty good sample size. And the data really doesn't change that much from year to year. Now employers in the JAN study represent a range of industry sectors and sizes and what happens is they contact JAN about workplace accommodation the ADA or Rehabilitation Act or in most cases both.

 Now, employers who contacted JAN were asked if they were willing to participate in what we call a user satisfaction survey.

 And approximately eight weeks or so after the initial contact, the employers were asked a series of questions about the situation they had discussed with JAN and the quality of the services that JAN provided.

 Now, one of the exciting changes that we went through this past year is that we made this electronic.

 So this was really exciting for us because we were able to increase our sample size just by switching it from a telephone-based survey to one that's electronic and people have been really responsive to that.

 And I'm pretty excited about that.

 So basically what happens now is it's asked electronically and you can go in and do it at your own pace. You don't have to use a telephone. No one has to call and contact you. But you do get asked via email if you would be willing to participate.

 So what makes this survey special is that of -- yes it's of people who contacted JAN but also it's of employers who actually have the information that we're seeking. So what happens is an external contractor provides the service for tallying the data for JAN so the data are collected from an unbiased researcher in other words we don't touch it do we Linda until it's done.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: No until it's done and then we can look at the feedback.

 >> BETH LOY: So what's the bottom line? Well, in this case workplace accommodations are low cost and they make a high impact. And this trend really hasn't wavered since the inception of the JAN study. Now best of all JAN can help employers make workplace accommodations free of charge. So all total, the JAN follow-up study includes 2,744 employers. Now we do plan to update that data again in September. We do it every September. And it tends to be a good time of year to do it. We feel like we have enough of a sample from the year to go forward.

 And we're pretty sure that the data are very reliable and also valid.

 So the data continue to be consistent with previous years. And what I'm going to do is highlight those results that have changed just a little bit over the past year and some that have not changed.

 This is pretty exciting for me. Because I like numbers.

 Linda, on the other hand, I'm not too sure she gets excited.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: I like the scenarios and stories they tell.

 >> BETH LOY: We'll do some stories here. So the first finding I would like to share is employers want to provide accommodations that they can -- so they can retain valued and qualified employees. What does this mean? How do we know this? Well, of the employers who contacted JAN for accommodation information and solutions most were doing so to retain or promote a current employee.

 This percentage was 85%. And that is up 3% from last year.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Oh, wow.

 >> BETH LOY: Yeah. On average this included those persons who had just been given a job offer or who were newly hired.

 So the average employee had actually been with the company for about seven years. That hasn't changed. Had an average wage of about $15 for those paid by the hour or an average annual salary of about $50,000.

 So not much change in those numbers. Now, in addition the individuals tended to be fairly well educated with 54% having a college degree or higher.

 So if we look at the average annual salary of about $51,900 for this group, that certainly didn't change much. It's always kind of fluctuated from around $50,000.

 Pretty interesting last year it was $15 paid by the hour and that year it's $16 so not much has changed.

 So next let's look at a situation that kind of highlights this.

 So we had a situation involving a Call Center employee who had diabetes and this individual requested a change to what they considered to be a very structured break schedule. To allow to take more frequent, shorter breaks.

 Now, as a reasonable accommodation, this employee really needed the flexibility. The employer ended up doing that, provided the flexibility with the break times as needed. And they agreed for the break to not exceed 30 minutes of the total break time in an 8-hour workday.

 And making this change, the employer felt caused them nothing. Just to sort of compromise on what the schedule needed to be. And the employer reported the benefits for making the accommodation. And the things that were reported, first off, the method of clocking in and out for breaks allowed both the employee and the employer to monitor the use of time.

 So the employer was more confident as was the employee about how much time was being put in during the day.

 Now, the employer also reported that the accommodation allowed the company to retain a qualified employee and to increase her productivity and attendance. And consistent with our data, this again was a very highly educated person. Who was receiving a fairly high salary in this position.

 And the situation involved retaining the individual and the employer did so at a very low cost, nothing.

 And all parties left the situation very satisfied.

 Now the second finding I would like to share is most employers report no cost or low cost for accommodating employees with disabilities.

 So how do we determine this? Well the employers in the study reported that a high percentage, 58%, were made at no cost.

 This means the accommodations cost absolutely nothing to make. Now, while the majority of the rest typically cost $500 these were one-time costs. Now we really didn't have enough data about on-going costs to calculate a reliable number but again these data didn't fluctuate very much we have been at $500 for several years now. And over half the accommodations being about 58%, that's fluctuated very little. It's up 1% from last year.

 So let's look at another real life accommodation situation. This is one that involved a groundskeeper who indicated he had developed a severe allergy to bee stings so that's a tough job to do when you are allergic. The employer had discovered an influx of bees on the grounds and subsequently hired a consultant to locate the nests and develop a protocol for eradicating them. As we all know we don't want the bees killed or have them moved.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: To a bee farm.

 >> BETH LOY: A bee farm yes a very happy bee farm so the employee also indicated he did carry an EpiPen and he needed a plan of action should he be stung. So with input from the flow the supervisors were trained on how to assist him if this type of bee sting would happen. Now, the employer reported benefits from making the accommodation, including that by making this accommodation, the employee was very happy with the accommodation. Stating that it improved the groundskeeper's productivity and the reported cost in this case was $500. Most of that had to do with having a plan in place to remove the bees when they were found and the time taken to train the supervisors.

 So $500, that's a pretty reasonable cost.

 So our next finding, employers report that accommodations are effective.

 I like this statistics because of those responding 74% reported the accommodations were either very effective or extremely effective and of course this is a really high percentage.

 So -- if you went to Vegas if you had a 74% chance of winning a million dollars.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: I would be retired.

 >> BETH LOY: Right.

(Chuckles).

 >> BETH LOY: You and me both.

 So a situation that kind of highlights the effectiveness of an accommodation.

 This was a bank employee. And this bank employee had fragrance sensitivity which we get a lot of questions about. She was having problems working due to irritants such as perfume and candles and those types of scents and she experienced nausea and migraines as a result. Now, as a reasonable accommodation, the agency did make some changes to policy regarding the use of frangranced items. And the employer also purchased an air purifier and provided all employees with education packets about the difficulties of individuals working with fragrance sensitivities. Now, the cost for this, $200. And again, consistent with our data, the employer stated that the changes were extremely effective because the employee is now able to work without getting sick from strong fragrances and odors.

 Moving on, so just kind of an overall summary of the study and we did provide a link to the study in your handout. So you can go and get more details if you would like. But the study results have consistently shown that the benefits that employers receive from making workplace accommodations far outweigh the low cost.

 And to top off these positive results about the costs and benefits of accommodations, the employers in the study also reported that JAN was effective in helping them.

 So we currently hope what this does is translates to very positive outcomes in the workplace when you have an individual with a disability and you contact JAN for additional information related to accommodations. Now just to keep up to date with this research like I said we come out with updates in September you can get it on our A to Z page which is available from JAN's homepage and you can go to the link, benefits and costs, under the A to Z by topic. And you'll be age to find this updated report. Like I said we did provide you with a link to it.

 Now, with that, let's get into a favorite topic for all of us, very exciting, politics. So glad I don't have to do this section.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Yeah, this year, as we all know, is an election year. So there are a lot of things we can talk about related to politics. But we've decided to focus on our favorite legal topic, which is the Americans With Disabilities Act. As I mentioned, the ADA is turn 30 this year, so we would like to honor it by looking at how some employers are moving beyond basic compliance and embracing the spirit of the ADA. So we're going to look at a few examples of basic ADA compliance and then some things employers can do to go beyond basic compliance to make their workplaces more inclusive of people with disabilities.

 So in our first example we have an applicant for an accounting position who uses a wheelchair. When he arrived for his job interview he found he could not enter the building because there was a long set of stairs up to the office. So he called the employer who apologized and then rescheduled the interview at an accessible location.

 While the employer quickly addressed the situation and did provide an alternative, it probably didn't make this applicant feel really welcomed or included to show up for the interview and then find out he couldn't even get into the building. It basically says to applicants we don't really expect people with disabilities to apply for jobs or work here. So what can employers do to make individuals with disabilities feel more included during the interview process? There are lots of things but I just want to mention a few.

 One thing you can do is notify applicants about where and how the interview will be conducted. If you know there are barriers like stairs, point that out to individuals who will be coming to your workplace. Let them know ahead of time so if they need an accommodation they can make a request for one beforehand. And then provide contact information for additional questions or to request an accommodation when needed. And make sure that whoever is the contact person is responsible and does follow up with the person and actually answers the phone or email.

 Or even better, hold interviews in an accessible location, if you can. If your facility is not accessible, try to find a place that is and hold the interviews there.

 Assume that you're going to have some people with disabilities coming to those interviews. Greet applicants at the door to identify any unforeseen accessibility issues even if you're in an accessible location you may not foresee all types of accommodations. You want to think about what accommodations might be needed ahead of time. But even if you can't foresee everything, meet them at the door, you can identify any problems by greeting people as they come into your facility.

 Let's look at another example of minimal ADA compliance. An employer allows supervisors to decide whether to let their employees telework. They give each supervisor discretion about whether employees can telework at all. An employee with a disability asks to telework but is denied by her service who is against teleworking across the board doesn't want any of her employees teleworking. In particular supervisor of course denies everybody telework so it's not really discrimination to deny this person telework. The employee with the disability needs an accommodation related to telework so goes to HR. So HR starts the accommodation process. Ultimately this employee is allowed to telework as an accommodation.

 Again we have a situation where an employee got the accommodation she needed. So the employer is likely in compliance with the ADA. But this situation doesn't really promote inclusion. First of all, some employees are allowed to telework without jumping through any hoops simply because their supervisors are pro telework. They don't even have disabilities, they just get to telework. Then you have an employee with a disability who needs to telework because of the disability and she has to go through all of this accommodation process, she has to get medical documentation. She has to do a lot more than our co-workers down the next hall that get to telework automatically and that just doesn't seem right. And the other thing is now she knows that her supervisor doesn't like the fact that she's teleworking so what is their relationship going to be like so this just creates all kinds of problems.

 So how could this employer make this situation more inclusive?

 Well, one thing you want to focus on is don't make employees with disabilities jump through those extra hoops have some kind of process for reviewing any denial by a supervisor. If you're going to let supervisors have discretion the minute an employee says I need to do this because of a disability, pop that up to your accommodation specialist or your designated expert to review and have that request automatically okayed rather than making the person jump through the hoops.

 Build accommodations into your policies if you can in this situation with the telework policy giving supervisors discretion except when it's an accommodation situation. Have flexible policies for everybody if you can. Ideally you'll let everybody telework equally you'll get flexible schedules equally and allow leave equally and this will reduce the need for accommodations because your policies are going to cover a lot of things that people would otherwise have to request.

 Another example, and this is one we've been hearing a lot about in the last couple of years. An employer gives sit/stand workstations to any employees who request them and guess what, everybody wants one and all of a sudden it's too expensive to continue giving them out to everybody so the employer decides to only give them if needed for a disability. Decides to take the workstations away from everybody who already has one so they don't have to buy any new ones and then provides information about how to request one as an accommodation and then gives them back out to people with disabilities on a case-by-case basis.

 Again, there doesn't appear to be an ADA compliance issue here because the employees with disabilities can request the types of workstations that they need to accommodate their disabilities and the employer is giving them those workstations but think about how this might affect their relationship with co-workers. They are going to see who is getting those sit/stand workstations that they had and now they know that there's was given away to somebody else and they don't have one. And not only is this going to possibly build resentment but indirectly this is disclosing that certain employees have disabilities and the co-workers may develop a negative view about the ADA and accommodations so this kind of situation we hear about it a lot but we think it's a tough one to dig yourself out of so how can you handle this differently? Ideally you want to think about this before. Don't set this up this way. Think about whether you can afford to give everybody a sit/stand workstation before you say anybody can have one. But once you're in this situation where you didn't realize it was going to get too expensive and you've been giving them out one thing you could consider is grandfathering in the employees who already have workstations instead of yanking them from people and building that resentment let everybody who already asked for one have one and move forward from there if you don't want to do that at least don't remove the workstations until you go through the accommodation process because you may be removing them from people who need them in order to do their work or comfortably do their work and they are going to have to wait out the process before they can get their accommodation back in place.

 Consider practicing universal design, build in your workstation so that they are flexible. Provide ergonomic workstations, if you can, so you can adjust them according to what each individual employee needs.

 If you can't do everything ergonomic and flexible and universally designed at least provide some ergonomic equipment for everybody. That can go a long way, especially if you're going to be handing out workstations that not everybody can have.

 Here is another example we hear a lot. An employee is addicted to drugs, decides it's time to finally get some help so he goes to the employer. He indicates that he's addicted to illegal drugs and he says, I want to get help. I need some leave time to go to rehab.

 This particular employer has zero tolerance policy for illegal drug use and decides to terminate the employee under the policy.

 As you probably know illegal drug users aren't protected under the ADA when the employee acts on individual use and the employer finds out somebody is addicted any time this employer finds out somebody is using drugs addicted or not and fires them, technically the employer can fire any employee who is illegally using drugs, at least the ADA doesn't prohibit it. How does this look to employees with addiction problems to other co-workers? It basically sends the message to people that the employer doesn't want to give them a chance so other employees aren't likely going to come forward and get help if they need it, it could be a problem in the workplace if employees have problems like this and they can't ask for help and try to keep pushing through. So what are some more inclusive options? Allow leave when employee voluntarily comes forward and wants to get help. Maybe you want to modify your zero tolerance policy and say, unless someone voluntarily discloses and comes and asks for help, then we're going to give them a chance. And if you don't want to risk liability, some employers use a last chance agreement and that's basically saying we're going to give you this chance but here is what you need to do we could terminate you under our policy but we don't want to we want to give you one chance and here is what we expect from you.

 Allow all employees a chance for sponsor treatment. A lot of times employees can't go get rehab or go get treatment unless you cover that under your insurance. Very inclusive workplace considers sponsoring treatment that people need. provide an EAP if you have that opportunity. Employee Assistance Program. Or any other workplace supports that you can provide. All of these things show that you care about your employees and you're trying to let them help themselves.

 And I want to just talk about one final example before we move on. Here we have an employee with PTSD who was allowed to bring his service dog to work. His co-workers see the dog of course and start asking questions about why that employee gets to bring his dog to work the supervisor responds by saying she will not discuss another employee with co-workers and this is appropriate for the supervisor to say. The ADA's confidentiality rules don't allow employers to disclose disability-related information to co-workers. But what's going to happen here? Again, co-workers may resent the employee or they may unknowingly interfere with the work the service animal is performing with the employee by trying to interact with it because they don't know it's a service animal. What's a more inclusive alternative here? One thing is to provide options for how to respond to co-workers maybe the supervisor could say a bit more like we have a policy of respecting employee privacy so we can't discuss this with you but if you have any personal issues you would like to discuss please let me know turn it back on the employee don't just say, shut up, I'm not going to talk to you. Even better, ask employees with disabilities if they want to voluntarily educate co-workers. And I mean voluntarily. As long as it's voluntary, you can invite employees with disabilities to educate their co-workers. This employee doesn't really need to go into detail about the disability. But could educate co-workers about the service animal and how they are appropriately interacting with it and then you can always do general disability awareness and etiquette training you don't want to just focus on service animals without talking with the employee with the disability but in general you can do disability awareness and etiquette training.

 So if you're interested in more ideas about making your workplace more inclusive for people with disabilities, take a look at our workplace Accommodation Toolkit. There's a wealth of information in the toolkit. And that is free, linked on our resource handout that we made for you under the politics section.

 So the ADA is making headline news as always and it looks like it's going to continue to do so for a while as it moves into its 30th year so stay tuned to the JAN Website for all of the breaking political and legal news and now I'm going to turn it back over to Beth for my favorite part of the program and that's exciting developments in the world of technology.

 >> BETH LOY: No pressure.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: No pressure make it good.

 >> BETH LOY: Yeah let's go ahead and dive in here to different types of technologies that are very new and some that aren't even on the market yet first here we have something called the WeWalk Smart Cane and this is developed by the young guru academy in London, England a brand-new digital product it combines a digital mobility cane with SmartPhone technology. It will detect obstacles. Using an ultrasonic sensor. It can control your SmartPhone via touch pad. That's on the cane. And it will --

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Wow that's a good start.

 >> BETH LOY: Yeah. It is an open platform. So it can actually be integrated in the future with Uber, and even Alexa.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Wow.

 >> BETH LOY: Yeah so this is going to be some exciting development of this product I think.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: That's cool.

 >> BETH LOY: Because you can imagine how you can link this to your Uber and how you can talk to Alexa and Google is giving you directions and you would probably still end up lost like I do.

(Chuckles).

 >> BETH LOY: But you know this is just a great invention to be able to interact with all of these other apps and things that we have on our SmartPhones.

 Next product this is called a Segway S-pod.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Oh, I need one of those.

 >> BETH LOY: Don't we all. It is an electronic vehicle. Considered a personal transportation vehicle. It will be available in 2021. There is no price yet. You can go up to 24 miles per hour. But I'm sure if you found a farmer, the farmer could modify that. Get you going a little faster.

 It uses a joystick instead of the traditional segway leaning of the body. It has a little joystick there on the side.

 It's basically a sit on wheels. And it self-balances, now segway claims you cannot tip this thing.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Oh wow we can challenge that.

 >> BETH LOY: I know. And really this is going to be very useful for individuals who say work in malls or airports or at amusement parks and have to walk long distances at certain times during the day.

 You can also use -- use it with a tablet and the tablet fits down in the armrest and you can use the tablet to control it. It's about 260 pounds and 60 inches in height and can handle about 300 pounds.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: I'm going to have to sell my car and get me one of those.

 >> BETH LOY: Pretty interesting.

 Okay. This next one is an accessible escalator.

 And this has been designed in Japan.

 It is unique to that country so far. Basically what happens with the escalator is that three steps stay at the same height to create a platform and those steps are painted in blue. And what happens is a person comes and clicks a button on the escalator and that platform levels out and the platform is with that special color and the person with the wheelchair can go on to that platform.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Oh wow it would be handy at the airport with your luggage, too.

 >> BETH LOY: Yeah to prevent you from going backwards and forwards there's 5 cent meter block that comes up once you're on it because the escalator has to stop in order for you to get on it and then once you're on it, it's 5 centimeter block that comes up to block you in. Prevent you from rolling forward or backward.

 Right now you do need a staff assistant to stop and start the escalator. And it's not on the market yet. But you can certainly see a lot of potential for this.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Yeah, that's neat.

 >> BETH LOY.

 >> BETH LOY: This next product is called Sign-IO Gloves. This was developed by an engineer, Gary Grimes, in Kenya for his 6-year-old niece who was deaf. The family was having trouble communicating with her and Alela, the engineer, decided he was going to develop these gloves. And these gloves translate signed hand movements into audible speech. So the gloves can recognize hand and finger movements and transfer them to an app on Bluetooth the gloves have sensors on each finger and once to the SmartPhone the text-to-speech function on the SmartPhone will translate it into speech.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Amazing.

 >> BETH LOY: So you put the gloves on. You speak in sign. And it goes from the gloves to the sensors to the SmartPhone to the text-to-speech on the SmartPhone and back out in speech. No price on that yet as they are not on the market yet, either.

 Here is a new kind of SmartWatch. This is called the Dot Watch by Dot Incorporation.

 This watch is actually powered by magnetism and you can go ten days without a charge. Which that in itself is amazing.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Yeah, exactly.

 >> BETH LOY: It's basically a Braille SmartWatch. It has Braille and tactile response. It gives you the time, the date, you can set an alarm. It has a full featured clock. It has a timer with a stopwatch and a calendar. It will also translate your text messages into Braille. It will vibrate and display the name of a caller or the person using it. The cost of this is only $400.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Is it available, though.

 >> BETH LOY: Yeah, it is.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: That's neat.

 >> BETH LOY: Next we have the AirPods from Apple. And these aren't really new but there is kind of a hidden feature with the AirPods that not many people use. And this is called Live Listen.

 And you can go to actually the control center of your SmartPhone or your iPad or whatever you're using to use your AirPods. And you can activate what's called the Live Listen.

 And then you can take and place the device like your SmartPhone in front of say a person that you want to hear at a meeting.

 Then what happens is, as the person talks into your SmartPhone, you can hear it through the AirPods in your ears. So you know, Linda, if we're in a meeting and there's a lot going on, there's a lot of background noise or something, like there was in our meeting this morning, if you're at one end of the table speaking, I could simply take my SmartPhone put it down in front of you I could go back to my seat at the other end of the table with my AirPods and turn on Live Listen and I can hear you just as if you were sitting next to me.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: That's great and carry it with you all the time. It's a small little accommodation.

 >> BETH LOY: Price on those is about $170. Unless you want the Porsche version of them and then the price kind of goes up.

 Okay. Next product that we have is the Livio AI hearing aids. These are touted to be very effective in noisy environments. The other thing this does is it can track body and brain health, which I'm not too sure I want mine tracked.

(Chuckles).

 >> BETH LOY: But what it will do is if you fall, it will send a fall alert.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Oh, wow.

 >> BETH LOY: It also has different adjustments on it that you can preprogram based on the environment so say you work in a manufacturing facility and you go from an area that's kind of noisy, you can set that area as 1, you can set your meeting environment as 2. You go into the kitchen and interact with your co-workers, you can set that as 3.

 And when you go home and you don't want to hear your kids or your spouse, you can turn it off.

(Chuckles).

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Speaking from personal experience there?

(Chuckles).

 >> BETH LOY: So that kind of makes it neat that you can program it based on the environment you're in. And for individuals who may have problems with falls, we may worry about them. Or they may just work individually.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Oh yeah that's really good for that. And it can notify somebody else.

 >> BETH LOY: Yes. Price of these, they are a little pricey. Not really for hearing aids but still a little pricey. 2500 to $3,000.

 Next product, this is a MARK 2 Wearable Glove Barcode Scanner. Basically this replaces the heavy scanner that you see people using when they have to twist and turn or even the hand scanner where they have to use the trigger motion.

 So this will replace those heavy and clunky scanners. You can connect this, as well, with Bluetooth. You can get 6,000 scans on this thing or 15 hours of battery and the scanner is on the back of your hand. And it's really good for say packing stations or processing different types of boxes and things like that where you ship a lot. And on the back of the hand, you can track what's happening to your package. Instead of having to move back and forth from a scanner to a control monitor. So you know how like when we go grocery shopping, you'll notice the person puts it over the scanner. Sometimes that's the rescanner with the hand. Sometimes it's the Internet manually. And then has to turn and make sure it went into the tally in the register.

 This will do it all in one swipe. And you can track what's happening. And if it went into the system right on your wrist.

 Price of these for each glove is a thousand bucks.

 Next one, this is kind of a cool product for a person that has to change a lot of tires and that would be me. I go through a lot of tires. We have very bad roads here in West Virginia and also on the farm we go through a lot of tires. This thing is called a Tire Spyder. It will allow you to change the tire without taking the wheel and tire off of the vehicle.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: To save your back.

 >> BETH LOY: I mean it makes me speechless so it's considered a mobile handheld tire changer and you can just roll it along, you hook it to the wheel, off comes the tire and puts on a new tire. Amazing. 3500 to $4,000 for this. If you change a lot of tires, it would certainly be worth it.

 Next product, another industrial product, this is called a Storm Floor Scraper. This is a floor scraper for things like carpet, wood, vinyl, I don't know if anyone has ever taken up vinyl, the old-time vinyl, it's like a nightmare. Anything like that that you have on your floor, you can do it while sitting.

 So instead of having to use like a crowbar or scraper, something like that, the person can get on this and this floor scraper will do the job for you.

 These run -- you know, depending on what you get, anywhere from 3 to $5,000 or so. It is controlled by a single joystick. They market it as having a very precise blade. So you can adapt the blade to what you're scraping. Like I said if it's carpet or wood or whatever.

 Also it has an app with it of course.

 And that app will monitor the charge to it, since it's basically rechargeable battery. For that.

 That will save your back. Saves your wrists, saves all kinds of things. It would have to be a larger space of course. But you could definitely see for like large venues where that would be beneficial.

 Next one, this is a product actually Linda found. This is called a power wrench. This is what they call a portable valve actuator that runs on air. So you can hook it to air and it gives you a lot more power to open up specifically valves. So these are valves that without something like this can take up one to two hours to open.

 Of course that gets the time down to one or two minutes. This is -- it's certified -- it's a device that's certified for various different industries as safe. And as you can tell it has to be safer than standing over the valve because with this device you can stand sort of to the side of the valve so if something did happen, it would give you a little bit of space between the device and yourself.

 So it runs about $3,000 and up. They make different sizes for different sized valves. So it's a pretty good product there for someone who works in that environment.

 And the last product that I have kind of a fun product, this is a chord assist guitar. It was designed by a gentleman named Joe Birch. And he has retinitis pigmentosa.

 And he needed some adaptations to be able to continue to play the guitar.

 Now, this guitar is considered accessible. It has a built-in computer that actually attaches to the cloud. It will give you LCD display. It will give you a Braille display. And it will also give you a voice speaker. And you can have conversations with this guitar. Like you do with Alexa.

 So you can ask the guitar, can you show me a B flat? And the guitar will show you a B flat. Both visually with an LCD and with Braille.

 I think it's an amazing invention.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: It is.

 >> BETH LOY: And the price is 260 to $400 made it real reasonable.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: Yeah that is reasonable.

 >> BETH LOY: He wasn't in it to make money. He was just in it to be able to do something accessible. So pretty fun device I think. For people who are interested in music and playing the guitar.

 Okay and with that, that wraps up our technology section and how are we going to wrap it up Linda.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: We are going to wrap it up we have actually a couple more sections we're going to go through them quickly and thanks for the wonderful technology I always love that part.

 >> BETH LOY: We're going to do living and then we'll do a real short section on the world yeah.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: So this year in the living section of our broadcast we're going to be talking about living and working. Employees with disabilities, as you all know, have the same life we need to deal with related to working. Getting to work, dealing with care taking issues, if you're a caretaker. Handling a myriad of problems that come up in your personal lives. But employees with disabilities may have additional things that they have to deal with, for example, like taking medication and dealing with the effects of the medication, finding transformation when they can't drive, handling extreme fatigue. Dealing with changes in the workplace that create barriers. All kinds of different things that can come up with disability related limitations what we're going to talk about today is whether employers have any duty within the ADA to help with accommodations to help employees with disabilities to help with these issues a lot of you know ADA requires covered employers to give reasonable accommodations so employees can perform essential functions of their job but other people aren't so clear why employers have to provide accommodations one of the questions we get at JAN over and over is whether an employer must ever provide an accommodation for an employee who is adequately performing his job and the answer is yes. There are many situations in which an employer must consider accommodations even though an employee is able to perform all essential job duties I wanted to share with you some examples.

 Employees might need accommodations to maintain their health even though they can currently perform all essential functions. The logic here is that if they don't maintain their health they are not going to be able to continue performing their job. Or another way you can look at it is employees with disabilities should have the same opportunity as other employees to work without negatively impacting their health.

 Let me give you a few examples to illustrate what I'm talking about here. An employee with a mental health impairment must avoid undue stress or she'll have a flare-up of symptoms she's allowed to take a short break once she starts to feel overwhelmed and once she takes the break then she can go back to work an employee with diabetes must eat small snacks through the workday to maintain blood sugar levels so he's allowed to eat at his desk even though company policy is no one can eat at their desk. An employee with epilepsy brings a service animal to animal to tell them a seizure will occur even though the company has a policy against animals in the workplace an employee with a sleep disorder is excused from rotating shifts so she can maintain a regular sleep pattern so she can work effectively.

 Another area in which employees might need accommodations is when they have trouble getting to and from work because of their disabilities while employees don't have to actually transport employees to work unless if you transport all employees to work then you'll have to provide accommodations related to transportation but let's say you don't provide transportation to and from work then you don't have to provide transportation to employees with disabilities but what you do have to consider is other accommodations when an employee's disability makes it difficult or impossible to get to work. And those accommodations might include schedule modifications or telework.

 Underlying reason why employers may have to provide this type of accommodation is that employers typically control the schedules and the work locations. So when a schedule or a work location is the barrier, the employer must consider reasonable accommodations to overcome that barrier. Let's look at some examples.

 An employee with lupus and fatigue has difficulty maintaining stamina at work because of a long commute most of her job can be done from home so she's allowed to telework several days a week to help reduce her fatigue. An employee who is blind uses public transportation that is only available at certain hours of the day so his employer changes the employee's schedule so he can access the public transportation.

 An employee with a gastrointestinal disorder has to use the restroom frequently and often without much notice. It makes it difficult for him to commute to work because there's no place to stop and use the restroom he's allowed to transfer to an office closer to his home that's along a route with public restrooms in all these cases employees can do their job but can't get to work to do them. Here is another area in which an employer might have to consider giving accommodations even though an employee is performing his job adequately for some people with disabilities they can do their jobs but it takes a lot of effort to do it because of their disability in this type of case the employer has a duty to consider accommodations so the employee can perform his job without struggling.

 An example is an employee with a learning disability must work extra hours to get all of his work done because he has trouble reading so it takes him a long time to read the materials he needs to read his employer provides screen reading software to make it easier for the employee to access information so he can get his work done as efficiently as co-workers without disabilities. An employee with cumulative trauma has difficulty typing she is meeting the minimum productivity standards but she wants to work at a higher standards in the hope of receiving a promotion she employer provides Speech Recognition Software for data input to increase her typing speed and an ergonomic workstation that enables her to work faster.

 In some cases issues arise in the workplace that create temporary barriers for employees with disabilities for example an employee with chemical sensitivity who is allowed to work from another location while the office is being repainted and new carpets are offgassing an employee uses a wheelchair and works object the third floor and gives another office until the elevator is repaired and an employee with multiple sclerosis has temperature sensitivity is given a cooling vest and cooler office until the air conditioner is repaired so all of these employees are performing their jobs but employers still have to consider accommodations under ADA in addition to be legally required accommodations these types of accommodations promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of employment as I discussed earlier inclusion is kind of the way we're heading now.

 And that's the news about living and working. Stay tuned to the JAN Website for all of the latest news and now back to Beth to round out the show with the world report.

 >> BETH LOY: And we're going to talk about the Coronavirus. Just a little bit about the Coronavirus, it does not have anything to do with the beer you drink.

(Chuckles).

 >> BETH LOY: I don't know. People. So the history of Coronaviruses goes back to the late 1960s. The coronaviruses that we're familiar with include SARS and MERS and this new one is called Wohan and the virus is named after a crown-like appearance of the expressions on the -- projections on the surface when you look on the microscope to analyze it it is basically a Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. It is related to Coronaviruses discovered in bats. There was some research that tried to tie it to snakes. But that's been discounted as of right now.

 The epidemic quote-unqoute began in Wuhan, China on December 12th, 2019.

 It is spread by airborne droplets of fluid and it can be deadly for individuals.

 Now, why is this important for current events in accommodations? Well.

 >> LINDA CARTER BATISTE: You know that dealing with communicable diseases in the workplace is really scary but you need to remember that the ADA could apply to the situation and you want to keep the rules in mind. The first thing you want to remember is make decisions based on facts. You need to look at what is actually happening, not speculation because it's scary. So under the ADA employers are allowed to make decisions based on actual safety concerns but they have to be real so you want to sort out what's going on and remember when you're sorting out what's going on the ADA medical exams and inquiry rules apply. This type of situation in order to ask medical questions or require a medical exam you have to have a reasonable belief based on objective evidence that a specific employee might pose a direct threat so you can't just go asking all employees medical questions or putting them through medical screening without any evidence of exposure or symptoms. So the best thing to do is rely on the experts to guide you, you want to get information from your public health authorities like the World Health Organization or the CDC. They are closely monitoring the situation and they are provided updating information for employers all the time.

 And don't forget even if a direct threat exists employers have to consider whether there might be accommodations to reduce or eliminate the threat. Beth do you want to talk about what those could be?

 >> BETH LOY: Sure and some of those we are pretty familiar with. If we do accommodations. And that can be something like a modified break schedule. Removal of marginal functions. Flexible scheduling. Leave. And telework. And I think what we've got to think about here is, you know, if an individual has an active virus, they might need one type of accommodation like telework or leave. And if they are recovering from the virus afterwards, their staminas can be very low and they may need accommodations like break schedule marginalized functions to return to work and flexible scheduling so it's not just about when it's active. It's after the individual is hopefully recovering from the virus.

 So with that, we would like to wrap our webcast for today. You can stay tuned for different types of world news at our Website at askJAN.org. And again we provide a list of links for you in the handout today. If you really want to stay up to date, be sure to sign up for our newsletter off of our Website. And remember, you can always contact JAN any time. And with that, Linda and I would like to say thank you for attending. Just a reminder that you will receive an evaluation form. And certainly we would like to thank everyone who tuned in today. This is one of our favorite presentations to do every year. We get excited about it. So if you need additional information or you want to discuss something that we talked about in the Website please -- in the webcast please feel free to contact us we thank you for attending and thank you also to Alternative Communication Services for providing the net captioning we do hope the program was useful as mentioned earlier an evaluation form will automatically pop up on your screen in another window. If you don't have your popups blocked. As soon as we're finished. We will send you one afterwards in addition to that one. We do appreciate your feedback so we hope you'll take a minute to complete the form.

 This concludes today's webcast.

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