Peck, B., & Kirkbride, L.T., (2011). Why businesses don’t employ people with disabilities*. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 16, p. 71-75.

This research is from a business perspective and shares the unspoken fears within the  
employer community related to the hiring and advancement of people with disabilities. It  
discusses the importance of understanding these fears and the strategies that will be  
necessary for combating these issues. Businesses seldom acknowledge the actual reason that stops them from hiring people with disabilities. It appears fear could be an overriding motivation for not hiring a person with a disability.

One of the fears is fear of the cost associated with hiring an individual with a disability. The first fear that limits employment opportunities of people with disabilities is the fear of potential unknown costs such as accommodations. While the American Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1995 has helped level the playing field for people with disabilities, there is still a major education gap in the workplace. Many employers jump to the conclusion that they would be required to spend tens of thousands of dollars bringing their business up to ADA standards if they were to hire someone with a disability. Few businesses would be willing to invest that kind of money just to bring a new employee on board. The reality is very different with a recent report from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) reveals that 20% of employer accommodations cost nothing and 80% cost less than $500.

Another fear is fear of additional supervision and productivity loss. A second fear is the fear of what affect a person with a disability would have on the workplace. This is much more subtle and can be more difficult to overcome than other employment related concerns. The major components of this fear are best viewed as two-fold. First, employers are concerned about the special attention that may need to be devoted to employees with disabilities. They are concerned about the amount of time the supervisor would need to commit to a worker with a disability and subsequently keep them from their other duties. The second component is the concern regarding the productivity of the employee with a disability. The question foremost in the businessperson's minds is regarding productivity concessions for the employee. The employers concern is often their perceived requirements to have different productivity standards for two employees doing the same job.

It is clear to me reading this article that employer education is necessary. If there are fears regarding employees with disabilities …even the thought of a disability more education must be done. I found this article to be of interest since it specially mentions the fears that employers have regarding hiring employees with disabilities. These “fears” are not often articulated and thus discrimination occurs without the direct knowledge of the individual. As I read more of this research I recognize that pre-employment disclosure is a slippery slope and must be approached with care.