

ACC News

»» A newsletter for health care professionals

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Serious injury service launched

ACC has established a new service that specialises in working with people with spinal cord and moderate to severe traumatic brain injuries.

Claims currently managed by case managers in ACC branches are being transferred to the new 'National Serious Injury Service', which aims to:

- » help people with serious injuries to live more independently in their communities and participate in paid employment
- » get better value for New Zealanders through the money ACC spends on their behalf to provide support for people with serious injuries.

The Service is currently operating in Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Hawkes Bay and will be operational nationwide by March.

What does this mean for health professionals?

Achieving the Service's goals requires a different approach to the way ACC works with service and health providers and people disabled through injury.

The new approach includes:

- » using evidence-based methods more to improve decision-making consistency and ensure better and more sustainable outcomes for ACC clients
- » using new assessment tools and procedures (these are currently being trialled)
- » specialised assessment services. A national tender for these services will be advertised on the Government Electronic Tendering Service (GETS) website in March
- » new services to help people with disabilities to:
 - » live more independently and participate more fully in community activities (Supported Independent Living services)
 - » find permanent employment (Supported Employment services). A national tender for these services will be advertised on GETS in April
- » outcome-based reporting for new and existing services for seriously injured clients.

For more information on assessment and outcome measures, please contact Michelle Wilkinson on 09 915 9488, 027 208 7751 or michelle.wilkinson@acc.co.nz

For more information on the new services, please contact Mary Leighton on 04 918 7520 or mary.leighton@acc.co.nz

Advisory group established

The new Service was established in close consultation with seriously injured ACC clients and carers – work that led to the establishment of a permanent Serious Injury Advisory Group to provide ACC with direct client input and feedback on issues affecting people with serious injuries. The group will consist of up to 10 ACC clients who've had a serious injury and have active connections with their local disability communities. It will meet three times a year, with the first meeting in March.

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New approach to post-brain injury rehabilitation

ACC is introducing a new rehabilitation service model for people affected by moderate or severe traumatic brain injury (TBI).

The model aims to provide better-quality, more streamlined and more appropriately targeted services. It will be developed in partnership with the Northern Rehabilitation Consortium, which comprises Auckland University School of Medicine, AUT University School of Rehabilitation and Occupation Studies and Cavit ABI Services.

The model will be based on a national 'Centre of Excellence' which will commence operations in February 2008. Operating as a charitable trust, the Centre will work with service providers and academics to develop, promote and monitor standards and processes for brain injury rehabilitation in line with international best practice.

It will focus on ensuring that people with TBI have fast and easy access to appropriate, high-quality early intervention treatment and rehabilitation – all with the aim of supporting them in achieving their goal of resuming life back in their communities.

ACC will provide seed funding, but over time it is expected the Centre will be self-sustaining.

What does this mean for health professionals?

Any new contracts for moderate to severe TBI services in future will reflect the model's focus on delivering improved assessment processes, better targeted assistance and more effective service coordination.

The model roll-out

Cavit ABI Rehabilitation has been contracted to trial delivery of the new early intervention approach to rehabilitation services in Northland, Auckland and Waikato. Cavit ABI will provide the hub of services working with local providers to meet the clients' requirements for services. Over the next two to five years, service hubs will be developed to extend delivery into other regions. Likely to be based in Wellington and Christchurch, the hubs will work with the Centre of Excellence and local providers to improve the processes and outcomes of rehabilitation for New Zealanders who have TBI, and their families.

Services outside of Northland, Auckland and the Waikato will continue under the present contractual arrangements until the trial is completed and evaluated and all providers have been contacted about possible impact on their services. Providers with existing active rehabilitation contracts in the Northland, Auckland and Waikato areas have been contacted about the impact the trial will have on their services.

For more information about the new model, please contact Petrina Turner on 04 918 7612 or petrina.turner@acc.co.nz

Presentations on the new TBI model

ACC will be presenting the new early intensive rehabilitation service to providers and health professionals nationwide during March and April. The dates for the two-hour presentations are:

LOCATION	DATE	TIMES	VENUE
Rotorua	Thursday 6th March	1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm.	Novotel Rotorua, Matariki Room, Lake End, Tutanekei St, Rotorua
Hawkes Bay	Friday 7th March	1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm.	Eastern Institute of Technology, Gloucester St, Taradale, Napier
Palmerston North	Monday 10th March	1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm.	Illuzzions Hotel, 127 Fitzherbert Avenue, Palmerston North
Wellington	Tuesday 11th March	1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm.	Kingsgate Portland, Cnr Hawkestone St and Portland Cres, Wellington
Christchurch	Thursday 3rd April	9am for 9.30am – 11.30am.	Equestrian Hotel, 6 Tower Street Hornby, Christchurch
Dunedin	Friday 4th April	9am for 9.30am – 11.30am.	Pacific Park, 22–24 Wallace Street, Dunedin
Nelson	Monday 7th April	1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm.	Trailways Hotel, 66 Trafalgar Street, Nelson
New Plymouth	Wednesday 16th April	1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm.	Devon Hotel, 390 Devon Street East, New Plymouth
Auckland	Thursday 17th April	1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm.	Mountain Richmond Lodge, 676 Mount Wellington Highway, Mount Wellington
Waikato	Friday 18th April	1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm.	Novotel Tainui, 7 Alma Street, Hamilton
Whangarei	Monday 21st April	1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm.	Cheviot Park Motor Lodge, Cnr Western Hills Drive and Cheviot Street

If you would like to attend please advise Rachel Pattison on rachel.pattison@acc.co.nz for catering purposes.

Fatigue – is it affecting you and your colleagues?

As we embark on another busy year, now is the time for you and your colleagues to be more aware of the dangers of fatigue in the workplace and when driving, especially to and from work.

Fatigue can affect our mental and physical abilities in all areas of our lives. For health professionals (especially nurses), factors such as heavy workloads, long hours and working shifts mean you are more at risk of fatigue than other workers – and this could compromise patient safety as well as your own safety.

Also, when you're driving, fatigue can affect your judgement and reaction time. This is on short trips near home as well as on longer trips. So, watch out for signs of fatigue such as frequent blinking or yawning, wandering thoughts, not remembering driving the previous few seconds or unintentionally drifting in your lane.

And remember, the only cure for fatigue is sleep.

Fatigue at work

If you're an employer or manager, you are required to take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of workers and patients, and do all you can to minimise fatigue in the workplace. There are many ways you can do this, such as looking into how workflow is organised and scheduled, ensuring the availability of water and healthy food, that people take breaks, and don't work on their own for long periods.

You should also develop a fatigue management plan and make sure that all employees know about the dangers of fatigue, how to spot the signs and how to minimise it. To assist you ACC offers a 1-hr workplace course – Managing Fatigue – to assist employees learn more about fatigue and how to reduce their risk of becoming fatigued.

For more information about this course or other assistance that ACC can provide please contact 0800 844 657 or refer to www.acc.co.nz/injury-prevention/work-safety/fatigue.

Research fund established

ACC has set up a new \$600,000 contestable funding round for research studies, with the aim of:

- encouraging innovative research on core areas of injury prevention, injury treatment and rehabilitation
- supporting research in areas that are relevant to ACC but poorly funded by other agencies
- providing seed funding to establish the potential of research projects that may attract future funding from the major research funders.

The research priority areas specified for the 2007/08 round were:

- to address issues of rehabilitation and injury prevention in an aging population
- to improve understanding of factors that will reduce disparities in access to the ACC scheme
- to develop and test innovative approaches to the purchasing or delivery of treatment or rehabilitation services.

From the more than 30 proposals submitted for funding, seven projects have been selected:

- Preventing falls in residential care: targeted exercise or a multi-factorial programme? by Dr Ngaire Kerse, University of Auckland
- Improving access to services: An evaluation of the ACC concussion clinic, by Dr Shane Harvey, Massey University.
- Research with Pacific peoples to explore Pacific peoples' awareness of, and motivations, barriers and enablers to, accessing the ACC scheme, and to test a selection of ACC's communications in determining effective and successful communications, by Ms Fleur Chauvel, Litmus Ltd, Wellington.
- Pain, Resilience and Rehabilitation: Enhancing Couples' Competencies, by Associate Professor Blampied, University of Canterbury.
- Investigating serious trauma outcomes: linkage studies of trauma registries. ACC claims and related health databases, by Associate Professor Shanthi Ameratunga, Auckland UniServices.
- Minimising acute postoperative pain following ACC funded elective shoulder surgery, by Dr Michael Fredrickson, Anaesthesia Institute, Auckland.
- Testing a new measure of work-ability, by Professor Kathryn McPherson, Auckland University of Technology.

All research reports will be made available to ACC and the public, and we'll be encouraging the researchers to publish their results in peer-reviewed journals.

Short notes

New web address for eLodgement

As you've probably heard already, the web address for eLodgements has changed. This enables us to introduce a number of benefits, which include removing the requirement for some providers to authenticate their digital certificates twice.

We'll be phasing out the old web address over the next year, so please make sure you start using the new one. If the ACC eBusiness team hasn't already been in touch to let you know how, simply phone 0800 222 994, option 1.

Clinical services contracts

A reminder to all providers that when you sign an ACC clinical services contract you agree not to charge co-payments to ACC claimants. If you do charge co-payments, we may have to review your contract.

Dental update

Endodontic treatment

Please check that you invoice ACC correctly for all endodontic treatment items under the Schedule to the Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Compensation (Liability to Pay or Contribute to Cost of Treatment) Regulations 2006.

Codes DN3, DY17 and DY18 for the complete preparation and obturation of root canal (per canal) – open or closed – are intended to cover two appointments. They also include open root canal apexifications.

Prior approval

Remember to get ACC's prior approval for crowns – and before you place or carry out crown preparations. This will avoid potential embarrassment for you, and disadvantages for your patients, if we decline to contribute to the costs of crowns because we consider them either unrelated to the ACC-covered injury or not meeting the criteria (based on external clinical advice) of “necessary and appropriate”.

Signing requirements for ACC42 and ACC37

We've been asked to clarify the signing requirements for the ACC42 (dental injury claim form) and ACC37 (dental tax invoice).

- The 'vendor number' on the ACC37 is the number of the account to which ACC makes payment. The 'provider number' relates only to the dentist who examined the patient or carried out the treatment. It can't cover all dentists in a practice.
- The dentist must provide their provider number and signature on the ACC42 and ACC37. No other provider or practice manager can use this provider number or sign on the dentist's behalf.
- If a dentist moves to another practice, their ACC provider number goes with them. The vendor number is the number that applies to the new practice.
- ACC may ask providers for clinical notes relating to injuries and treatment they provide. Treatment notes help to support treatment plans; if not provided, the patient's claim may be declined.

Upcoming conferences and events

New Zealand Pain Society Conference

12–15 March, Langhams Hotel, Auckland. www.nzps.org.nz

Rural GP Network Conference

28–30 March, Christchurch Convention Centre. www.rgpn.org.nz

Goodfellow symposium 2008

12–13 April, Hyatt Regency, Auckland.
www.goodfellowclub.org/2008/symposium

IPAC conference

17–18 April, Renouf Foyer, Wellington Convention Centre.
Conference is 17-18 April in the Renouf Foyer at the Wellington Convention Centre.
www.ipac.org.nz/conferences/ipac_conference_2008

Chiropractors providing EVT treatment

From 4 February, chiropractors qualified to provide extra-vertebral therapy (EVT) and recognised by the New Zealand Chiropractic Board (NZCB), will be able to diagnose, provide immediate treatment and make a claim to ACC on behalf of clients for Read Codes that are within their scope of practice.

This development is the result of extensive work by ACC, the New Zealand Chiropractors' Association and the NZCB.

It has required a change to the provider Claims Lodgement Framework (CLF), which shows the common injury types that specific treatment providers may treat and for which they may lodge claims. The CLF prescribes limits to the specific scope of practice for providers in lodging claims and enables them to not only diagnose but also provide immediate treatment.

If you are a chiropractor with an EVT qualification, please make sure the NZCB has your correct qualifications listed on its website. You are able to start claiming for relevant EVT treatments you provide from 4 February. The codes that have been added to your CLF are published at www.acc.co.nz (under For Providers > Providing Services > Provider Claim Lodgement Framework).

Payments

This change has required adjustments to ACC's claims management and medical fees processing systems. From 4 February, chiropractors qualified to provide EVT, will be identified as 'Chiro A' and the remainder as 'Chiro B'. Please note that the changes apply to new claims registered after 4 February; no retrospective payments will be made.

For more information

- If you have any questions about your qualifications on the NZCB website, please contact your professional board.
- For more information about the ACC claims system and Read codes, see Section 5.0 of the 2007 ACC Treatment Provider Handbook.
- For information about your payments, contact the Provider Helpline on 0800 222 070.