

A newsletter for health care professionals

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Getting better at work in Taupo

ACC's commitment to encouraging workplace rehabilitation has extended to a new pilot programme in Taupo that aims to help injured workers stay at work, where appropriate, while they recover.

Called 'Better@Work', the new programme involves GPs referring patients to a PHO-based Better@Work Co-ordinator, who then works with everyone involved (the GP, the client, the employer and other service providers) to establish the support needed to keep the injured person at work. The GP plays a key role by closely monitoring their patient until they are fully fit.

Serious injury and sensitive claims are excluded – and if it becomes clear that there are significant barriers to the person's rehabilitation or they are likely to lose their job, the Co-ordinator's role will be assumed by an ACC case manager. However, the GP will continue to monitor their patient's recovery.

Better@Work includes a focus on GPs' work certification practices. While time off work is beneficial in some cases, emerging evidence suggests that many injured people benefit from a more active approach to rehabilitation if they're supported to do so.

The Better@Work approach encourages treatment providers to take a broader view of their patients' interests, which involve staying at work where possible and enjoying the psychological benefits of engaging with

workmates, retaining work skills and enjoying the financial benefits of earning full wages.

The new service is being piloted for six months in the Lake Taupo PHO. Should it prove effective in achieving good client outcomes and greater productivity in the district, it's likely to be fully implemented, with the potential for rollout nationwide.

Free rehabilitation research updates

To stay up to date on global research into rehabilitation, subscribe today to New Zealand Rehabilitation Research Review.

This bi-monthly e-journal includes 'must read' studies, with commentary and advice from New Zealand rehabilitation expert Professor Kath McPherson from AUT. And it's free.

To subscribe, visit www.researchreview.co.nz. The next issue will be released at the end of March 2009, and the January 2009 edition is available online now, covering topics such as 'returning to work after cancer', 'treating rotator cuff impingement' and 'after-effects of head injury'.

Changes to ACC Obtain Employment service

Since tendering for the ACC Obtain Employment service in October 2008, ACC is having to make some changes. The nationwide launch has now been postponed.

We went to market for service tenders during October last year. Since then, the economic outlook has changed significantly and future employment indicators have made the feasibility of the new ACC Obtain Employment service less certain than initially anticipated.

Inconsistency in the quality of the tenders we received also highlighted that a national launch of the new service would be difficult to implement at the current time.

We've therefore decided to:

- stop the service improvement initiative in Christchurch and Northwood and revert back to the current national services. The objective of this initiative was to streamline the process within the new service, and we are very happy with the enhancements it has provided.
- trial the new Obtain Employment service in the lower South Island only. We're doing this to ensure ACC and all stakeholders understand the impact and the viability of the new service in the current economic environment. We anticipate this trial will begin mid year, and run for at least two years. Depending on results, we anticipate possibly extending the service to other parts of the country. Doing this may require a further tender process, and this is one option we'll look to explore as we progress.
- extend the contracts affected with providers of current vocational rehabilitation services across the rest of New Zealand.

We'd like to thank all those who responded to the RFP. We understand the response required a significant amount of time within a short timeframe. Feedback to shortlisted vendors will be provided.

If you have any queries about these changes, please contact Jan Marment at Jan.Marment@acc.co.nz or on 04 918 4077.

Online occupational disease case studies

In partnership with the Goodfellow Unit, ACC has spent the past six months developing and publishing a suite of five online 'occupational disease' case studies for GPs.

The fifth and final case study was released at www.goodfellowclub.org on 2 March 2009, with the series now covering:

- non-melanoma skin cancer
- cancer of the thorax
- contact dermatitis
- bladder cancer
- malignant neoplasms.

The case studies are based on the latest research and evidence-based practice, and are designed to enable GPs to better assess and manage the diseases/injuries covered. They build on the ACC Reviews released in 2007 (which are available at www.acc.co.nz under 'For Providers') and focus on new diseases covered by ACC in recent changes to the Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Compensation Act 2001.

It takes about an hour to read a case study and complete the associated quiz, with one CME point awarded per hour. GPs completing the quiz will be automatically issued with a CME Certificate.

If you're not already a member of the Goodfellow Club, it's easy (and free) to join and access the case studies. Simply visit www.goodfellowclub.org today.

Elective surgery is only funded for covered claims

ACC is only able to pay for surgery that is linked to the covered injury. Where the ARTP does not show the causal link for surgery in relation to the covered injury, ACC may ask you for further information or may decline to approve the surgery and reconsider other entitlements. It may be helpful to discuss this process with your patients at the time of considering surgery, should there be any doubt regarding the request for surgery and ACC's liability to pay for it.

Pharmaceutical update – pharmacy service charges

A reminder to all pharmacies that while ACC can consider contributing to the costs of some prescription items, we can't pay or reimburse pharmacy service charges.

Please make sure you itemise your pharmacy receipts to separate the prescription and pharmacy service charges. This will help us and our clients to establish the charges that are payable.

Health Innovation Awards

New Zealand Health Innovation Awards - Change in Timing

ACC and the Ministry of Health (MoH) established the annual New Zealand Health Innovation Awards in 2003 to promote and encourage excellence in health and rehabilitation and the sharing of innovative products, services and processes that can benefit more New Zealanders.

During 2008 the Health Innovation Awards were reviewed by the New Zealand Business Excellence Foundation, with the aim of continuous improvement of the Awards. Based on the review findings and our own analyses, MoH and ACC have decided to change the frequency of the event from annual to every two years.

We anticipate that changing to the bi-ennial Awards will:

- better complement the life cycle and reporting timeframe of projects in the health, disability and rehabilitation sectors, which often progress over a timeframe longer than 12 months

- ensure the continued number and high standard of entries, and that entries have the best opportunity to demonstrate measurable outcomes, and
- provide more opportunity for MoH and ACC to work with previous winners to encourage the promotion and transfer of innovation.

The next Health Innovation Awards are planned to take place in 2010.

Further information and key dates for the Awards, including the deadline for expressions of interest, will be published on the HIA website (www.healthinnovationawards.co.nz) later in the year.

Help to prevent falls in older people

If you have an older patient or relative who's fallen recently or is at risk of falling, you may like to recommend the Otago Exercise Programme (OEP) to them.

Developed by Professor John Campbell and the Falls Prevention Research Group at the University of Otago Medical School, OEP is an individually tailored, muscle-strengthening and balance-retraining exercise programme. It's been proven to reduce the rate of falls and the number of resulting injuries by 35%.

Participants must be aged 80+, or 65+ for Maori and Pacific people, and must also:

- live in the community
- be able to walk (with or without an aid)
- display at least one of the following fall risks factors:
 - had a fall in the past year
 - leg muscle weakness
 - impaired balance
 - fear of falling.

They don't need to have a registered ACC claim to participate, but must be referred by a registered health professional.

The one-year programme is free (funded by ACC) and delivered in the home by a physiotherapist or specially trained nurse. It usually involves five home visits and monthly phone contact by the instructor.

For more information about OEP (including contact details for providers in your area) or any other aspect of ACC's falls prevention activities, phone 0800 844 657 or visit www.acc.co.nz (under Injury Prevention > Home Safety).

Clinical notes – ensuring quality

When you're next completing clinical notes for ACC, please bear in mind the importance of making sure they are full and accurate.

Your notes are a critical part of ensuring your patients receive appropriate services and support. We use them to establish whether their injuries will be accepted for cover by ACC and if they are, to determine the treatment and support to which they're entitled.

We may also ask to see clinical notes if we need more information on a particular injury for a review by a peer in your clinical area, or where ACC is undertaking an audit of your practice.

If your notes are incomplete or inaccurate, it may affect ACC's decision to grant entitlements.

Here's a quick reminder of your clinical notes obligations as a treatment provider...

1. The service that you provide and invoice us for must include clinical records that meet the standards of your professional body and ACC's recommendations (see below)
2. Your clinical notes need to demonstrate that your treatment meets the legislative requirements covered on page 115 of the ACC Treatment Provider Handbook (available at www.acc.co.nz under For Providers > Resources)
3. Your treatment and clinical notes must be able to withstand scrutiny in peer reviews, audits (medical or financial) and medico-legal challenges

4. Your appointment book or record must be consistent with your invoice dates and the dates on your clinical notes.

Our recommendations for your clinical notes (found on p38 of your Treatment Provider Handbook) are that they:

- be in ink and legible, if handwritten
- include your name, signature (if on paper) and the date of the consultation/visit
- provide appropriate clinical reasons to justify the consultation /visit or ongoing treatment
- identify a treatment plan and rehabilitation expectations, as discussed with the patient, and detail progress towards outcomes or rehabilitation goals
- be in English
- be written at the time of the consultation/visit or shortly afterwards
- have any later notes appropriately dated and countersigned
- clearly demonstrate that you conducted each consultation/visit with appropriate levels of skill and care.

Your record of a follow-up consultation/visit should include:

- an evaluation of the effectiveness of previous treatment
- treatment provided and advice given
- the reason for change, if any, to an earlier treatment plan
- progress towards the outcome
- an outcome report, where required.

ACC News Feedback:

We would appreciate your feedback about ACC News. Please email us at feedbackaccnews@acc.co.nz.

Update your contact details:

To update your provider or vendor details please contact the Provider Registration Team on ph 04 918 7782 or email: registrations@acc.co.nz.

Conferences and events

National Care Management Conference

18 – 20 March, Duxton Hotel, Wellington.
www.nursemaude.org.nz/conference_2009

Goodfellow Symposium

27 – 29 March, Hyatt Regency, Auckland.
www.goodfellowsymposium.org

New Zealand Rural General Practice Conference

27 – 29 March, Wellington Convention Centre, Wellington.
www.rgpn.org.nz

Supported Living NZ Conference 2009

16 – 17 March, Museum of NZ: Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington.
www.slnz.org.nz

Practice Nurses' Conference 2009

1 – 3 May, Palmerston North Convention Centre, Palmerston North.
www.practicenurseconference.co.nz