

A newsletter for health care professionals

August 2009 – Issue 124



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Future-proofing the ACC scheme

There's no doubt that, in today's environment, ACC must respond and adapt to change. Economic and demographic developments are challenging the way we work, while our ongoing commitment to continual service improvement and the pursuit of best practice is demanding a new approach.

One of our most pressing challenges is ensuring the ACC scheme is sustainable. That means reining in the scheme's costs, which are rising unsustainably owing to increasing claim volumes, higher medical treatment costs and the more complex rehabilitation needs associated with an ageing population. These cost pressures are made even more difficult by the current economic climate, which has seen a dramatic fall in our investment returns and therefore the funds we hold in reserve to meet future liabilities.

The contract that exists between ACC and New Zealanders is ultimately grounded in the perception that ACC delivers quality care and value for money. In other words, people want to know that ACC will give them the help they need to get back on track after injury. But at the same time, the community simply cannot afford, and would not support, significant levy increases to offset the rising costs of running the scheme.

With this in mind, we've developed a renewed strategy for our business that focuses on managing cost increases and ensuring the scheme's sustainability while delivering quality service to clients.

It includes broader operating considerations such as moving to more of an insurance model of operation, more effective use of online communication and better claim management technology and processes

Three key initiatives in the health purchasing and provider relationships area are:

A new service delivery model

Through a new service delivery model we'll manage claims according to the complexity of their rehabilitation needs to ensure all clients receive the right services at the right time and at the right cost. The model will enable us to:

- rapidly meet the immediate needs of people with low complexity injuries,

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Future-proofing the ACC scheme *continued ...*

who can safely return to work or their other pre-injury activities

- respond more quickly and effectively to clients with complex rehabilitation needs
- more effectively work with and rehabilitate 'long-term' clients, i.e. those who've been receiving rehabilitation help from ACC for a number of years.

Enhanced provider relationships

We've also developed a new 'Health Purchasing and Provider Relationship Framework', which aims to create a value-driven, supportive purchasing environment by:

- introducing new principles governing how we purchase services from health providers. For example, we'll shortly begin purchasing 'outcomes' rather than 'outputs' (in other words, we'll pay providers to achieve specified results rather than deliver specified services as they do at present)
- nurturing more productive relationships with providers by supporting them to work effectively and provide more developmental support and performance feedback.

Promoting 'better at work'

The 'better at work' philosophy is an important foundation for our change initiatives. It reflects international research that continues to affirm that recovering at work can significantly enhance rehabilitation, and that, with the right support, most people can recover from injuries at work.

Our new 'Stay at Work' service is a practical extension of the better at work philosophy. Launched in July, it takes a collaborative approach to helping injured employees to stay at work (or return as soon as possible) after an injury. It involves ACC working closely with injured employees and their doctors and employers to find ways for the employees to rehabilitate safely while still making a meaningful contribution to their workplaces.

Together, these three initiatives aim to improve the results of rehabilitation and contain increasing costs. We'll keep you updated with implementation, which includes a number of new approaches – including those in the next two articles.

ACC NEWS feedback:

We would appreciate your feedback about ACC News.

Please email us at feedback@acc.co.nz.

Supporting clients with longer-term claims

As part of our new service delivery model, we've introduced a new approach to working with clients who have ongoing rehabilitation needs more than 30 months after their injuries occurred.

Recognising these clients' often complex physical and psychosocial needs, the new approach aims to provide them with specialised help in returning to meaningful work or the greatest possible independence in their everyday lives.

Dedicated teams based in ACC branches will work exclusively with these clients to provide

improved support. This will include referring them to pain management and work rehabilitation programmes to:

- reintroduce them to routines of scheduled activities (establishing a foundation for further rehabilitation)
- help change any perceptions of their condition that may be restricting their rehabilitation and return to work.

If you'd like to know more about this, please contact your Relationship and Performance Manager or the Provider Helpline on 0800 222 070.

High-tech imaging changes – consultation

The new Health Purchasing framework includes a review of our purchasing practices for health and rehabilitation services, including those for high-tech imaging (HTI) – that is, services such as magnetic resonance imaging, computed tomography, scintigraphy and interventional radiology.

Given that we expect to purchase HTI for about 60,000 clients this financial year (at a cost of around \$60 million), our goal is to ensure that these services are financially sustainable while effective in meeting client needs.

As a result of a review, we're proposing some changes that will enable us to work more efficiently with HTI vendors and referrers and improve HTI services' value for money. The next step is to seek feedback through a public consultation process.

Have your say

The consultation period runs between 20 July and 17 August 2009. If you're interested in learning more about the changes and providing feedback, please view or download the consultation document at www.acc.co.nz/for-providers.

We welcome your contribution, which you can send by completing and emailing the feedback form to Alex Cameron, Programme Manager at alex.cameron@acc.co.nz. Oral submissions are also welcome, please contact Alex to arrange.

The closing date for submissions is 17 August 2009, with plans to start implementing the changes on 1 December 2009 (further changes are expected from July 2010).

eLodgement: would the real Arnie Smith please stand up?

Do you train people to use your practice management system (PMS) – or have you been recently trained to use it?

If so, please make sure that, when you enter a fictitious ACC45 into your system for testing, you don't actually send it to ACC

electronically. The best way to avoid this happening is to uncheck the tickbox on the ACC45 screen within the PMS.

If you're not sure how to do this, please contact the eBusiness Team on 0800 222 994 (option 1).

National Ambulance Sector Office (NASO) update

As you'll have read in the July issue of ACC News, the government has recently introduced some major new funding and other initiatives for the ambulance sector. These include the continuation of the joint ACC/Ministry of Health National Ambulance Sector Office (NASO), which is responsible for managing the Crown contracts.

With NASO now established as an ongoing initiative, Mark Woodard (who served as the establishment Group Manager for the introductory phase) completed his appointment on 30 June. Carol Clayton has been appointed to the role on an interim basis, with the permanent position advertised and expected to be appointed within the next three months.

A passionate advocate of frontline emergency response, Carol has worked in the health and disability sector for more than 30 years. In her senior management roles in provider organisations, she has worked extensively with the Ministry of Health and ACC on projects including drafting the initial papers for the formation of what is now NASO.

In other developments:

- Robert Turner has joined NASO as Performance Relationship Manager. With extensive experience in operational assessment and improvement, Rob will focus on developing a performance monitoring regime, organising the public release of agreed performance data and working with providers on operational issues
- Dr David Galler, an intensivist at Middlemore Hospital and part-time member of the Ministry of Health Executive Leadership Team, will be working on a limited basis with the Ambulance Sector Clinical Management Group to represent the Crown's interests
- Donaleen Shiell, a longstanding and valued member of NASO, will continue in her role as Contracts Manager.

We also expect to appoint a part-time clinician to assist Dr Galler and the Ambulance Sector Clinical Management Group.

Attitude Awards

The Attitude Awards are still open for nominations, so make sure you get your application/nomination form in before 4 September.

Last year's winners were an awe-inspiring group of people who proved that whatever your disability, it shouldn't stop you achieving your goals.

If you think a friend, family member or patient deserves to be recognised for their outstanding attitude, download an entry/nomination form from www.disabilitytv.com/awards. There are nine categories to enter and all celebrate the amazing achievements of people who live with disabilities or actively support people with disabilities.

A reminder about Annual Practising Certificates

Is your Annual Practising Certificate up to date? Have you sent us a copy?

Remember, all treatment providers and registered health professionals supplying services on behalf of ACC are required to have current Annual Practising Certificates (APC) – and when you renew your membership with the relevant 'responsible authority' (eg the Medical Council of New Zealand) you need to send us a copy of the new Certificate so we can update your record.

The consequences of inaction...

If we don't receive a copy of your new APC

and can't confirm your APC status with your responsible authority, we'll write to you and ask you to send us a copy within a specific timeframe. If we don't hear from you or receive confirmation from your responsible authority by that time, we may have to suspend your record – which means you may not be paid for services you've provided since the date your APC expired.

If have any queries about this, please contact the ACC Provider Registration team on 04 918 7782 or email registrations@acc.co.nz.

How safe is your home?

Remember, Safety NZ Week is back next month (7-13 September)!

You can get involved by displaying some of the free resources available in your waiting room. Visit www.homesafety.co.nz or email safetynzweek@acc.co.nz to order posters, top tips and general home safety leaflets. Some are available in other languages, including Maori, Tongan and Chinese.

Doing your bit to raise awareness of home safety and the preventive measures that people can take will not only help reduce the number of people injured in their homes, but also take the strain off your busy schedule.

Please get involved! By working together we can get the nation talking about risks in the home and making small but vital changes that will help reduce the number of injuries happening there.

Requests for orthotics and visual aids

We're requesting help from orthopaedic surgeons, sports physicians and hand therapists who prescribe orthotics for ACC clients, and ophthalmologists who prescribe visual aids.

To ensure we can respond to your requests quickly and efficiently – and make cover decisions for our shared clients as soon as we can – please use a dated prescription/referral form and clearly enter:

- the correct claim number
- the date of injury
- the client's date of birth
- your (printed) name and signature.

Please also include:

- a clear diagnosis and cause, eg sprain, tear, rupture of the specific site
- a description of the causal link between the accident/diagnosis and the requirement for the orthotic or visual aid
- how long you expect the client to need the aid, eg hip fracture: permanent leg length disability
- an explanation of why the condition has not resolved, if some time has elapsed since the injury
- all reports of scans or specialist appointments that support your request.

Upcoming conferences and events

20-22 August – **New Zealand Dental Association Regional Conference**, Wellington Convention Centre. www.conference.co.nz/index.cfm/NZDA09

27-30 August – **College of Emergency Nurses NZ-NZNO & NZ Flight Nurses Association Annual Conference 2009**, Hotel Grand Chancellor, Christchurch. www.conference2009.co.nz

9-12 September – **Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners Conference**, Duxton Hotel, Wellington. www.conference.co.nz/index.cfm/RNZCGP09

17-19 September – **New Zealand Association of Counsellors Conference**, Federated Farmers Building, Hamilton. www.nzac.org.nz

22-25 September – **Australian and New Zealand Burn Association 2009 Scientific Meeting**, Te Papa, Wellington. www.confer.co.nz/anzba09

24-25 September – **Carers New Zealand National Carers Conference**, Waipuna Events Centre, Auckland. www.carers.net.nz/index.php

2-4 October – **Occupational Physicians 'Adding Value at the Workplace'**, Napier War Memorial Conference Centre. www.confer.co.nz/anzsomnz09/

8-10 October – **New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists Clinical Workshops 2009**, Tauranga. www.nzaotevents.com

15-18 October – **Practice Managers and Administrators Conference**, Rydges Hotel, Christchurch. www.pmaan.org.nz/General/conference.html

16-18 October – **New Zealand Association of Hand Therapists Annual Conference**, Tauranga. www.nzaht.org.nz