

Welcome...

This edition of the Rehab Review features information on the new Medicare rebates available for individuals to see registered psychologists, a new option for lodging workers' compensation claims and WorkCover's new centralised process for assessing claims.

This edition also includes articles on access to voice amplifiers for individuals with vocal injuries and for

schools to purchase; tips for reducing the risk of sustaining a physical injury at work; a useful CD on Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace; and personal liability protection for Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators.

If you have any feedback on the Rehab Review newsletter or would like to contribute an article, please contact Nicola on 323 70789 or by email at nicola.barnes@deta.qld.gov.au

What's New in Rehab?

Lodging Compensation Claims Through Your Doctor

Injured employees can now lodge their application for workers' compensation from their Doctor's office.

Under this initiative, the clinic is able to fax a copy of the completed application form and medical certificate to WorkCover as soon as they assess that an employee has sustained a work-related injury. The injured employee should contact their school and advise them of the nature of the injury, expected period of absence or any restrictions the Doctor has certified on the medical certificate.

Once WorkCover has received the application, they will contact the Regional Office Rehabilitation Consultant or Claims Officer within 24 hours to advise that a claim has been lodged and request an Employer's Report. This report should be lodged within 8 business days. The aim of this initiative is to reduce the time taken to process a claim and to encourage the commencement of the rehabilitation process as soon as possible.

Centralised Assessment of WorkCover Claims

WorkCover Queensland have recently decided to centralise the assessing of all WorkCover claims for the whole state. This means that all new WorkCover applications will be sent to a WorkCover team located in the Brisbane office. The Brisbane team will determine:

- which claims to investigate,
- what investigations are required; and
- who will perform the investigation.

Following these investigations, WorkCover will make the decision on whether to accept liability for a claim.

If it is determined that a WorkCover Investigator is required to undertake investigations at a worksite (such as a school), the claim will be referred to a local WorkCover office for the investigation to be conducted.

If you have any questions in relation to this new process, please contact your Region's Senior Rehabilitation Consultant.

Medicare Rebates For Psychologist Visits

From 1 November 2006, the Australian Government introduced new Medicare rebate items for psychological treatment by registered psychologists.

These rebates provide more affordable mental healthcare to people living with psychological/psychiatric illness.

Medicare rebated psychological services can be provided to people with 'an assessed mental disorder' that are being managed by a GP under a GP Mental Health Care Plan or a Psychiatrist Assessment and Management Plan.

Under the new Medicare scheme, all registered psychologists who are endorsed by Medicare Australia can provide treatment for mental health problems. Services provided can include:

- Psycho-education
- Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT)
- Relaxation strategies
- Skills training (including anger management, social skills training and stress management)



- Interpersonal therapy

Medicare rebates for psychology services are limited to a maximum of 12 individual sessions per client per calendar year, with a review by the referring doctor required after the initial six sessions. Below is a guide to the rebates.

For 50 or more Minutes of Individual Service

	Schedule Fee	Medicare Rebate
General Psychology Services	\$88.20	\$75.00
Specialist Clinical Psychology Services	\$129.40	\$110.00

Up to 12 group session services in a calendar year are also available to eligible clients, where appropriate.

Employees need to decide if they will use Medicare or their private health insurance ancillary cover to pay for the psychological services. Private health insurance ancillary cover cannot be used to top up the Medicare rebates for these services.

For more information go to www.health.gov.au/mbsonline.

Frequently Asked Questions

Am I personally liable as a Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator?

Accredited Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators are protected under section 226 (5) of the *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003* for civil liability related to an act done, or an omission made, in giving effect to the Department's workplace rehabilitation policy and procedures.

This means that Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators acting in accordance with the legal definition of their functions (section 99B of the *Worker's Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*) and the legal standard of rehabilitation (sections 103 to 110 of the *Worker's Compensation and Rehabilitation Regulations 2003*) are protected from common law action related to their Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator role. Further guidelines for performing the role of a Rehabilitation and Return to Work

Coordinator is provided in the Department's rehabilitation policy and guidelines, which are available on the Creating Healthier Workplaces website at:

www.education.qld.gov.au/helath/rehab/res-pol.html.

To be an accredited Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator, an employee must successfully complete an accredited Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator course every three years. For details of Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator training courses, please contact the Claims Officer or Senior Rehabilitation Consultant in your Regional Office.

Ultimately, the Principal/Manager of each school/workplace is responsible for ensuring that workplace rehabilitation is facilitated for all employees who sustain an injury or illness at work. This includes providing reasonable access to suitable duties, and negotiating graduated return to work programs in accordance with current medical advice and operational needs.

Voice Amplifiers

The Organisational Health Unit loans voice amplifiers to Teachers who sustain voice injuries. The amplifiers assist with their recovery and minimise the risk of injuries being aggravated during return to work programs. These loans are based on employees providing documentation from an Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Specialist or a Speech Pathologist. This documentation must state:

- the diagnosed injury;
- whether use of a voice amplifier would assist recovery; and
- how long an amplifier would be required for use by the employee.

In addition, schools can purchase voice amplifiers through the Organisational Health Unit at a reduced price. These amplifiers can be used by Teachers at the school to aid voice projection when managing large groups of students, for example, during excursions, sports days or at musical rehearsals. In this way, voice injuries can be avoided and the risks of aggravating previous voice injuries can be minimised.

To organise access to voice amplifiers through the employee loan arrangement or for school purchase, please contact Mrs Debbie Thomas in the Organisational Health Unit on 3235 9967.



Physical Injuries

Employees who sustain injuries whilst involved in school sports or other physical activities at work may be covered for workers' compensation. However, before participating in any sporting or physical activity, employees should assess whether their current level of fitness, strength and flexibility enables them to safely perform the activity. Your level of participation should be adjusted for your own safety and if you are unsure of your physical fitness, you should consult your doctor.

Full employee participation in every physical activity for students is not required to achieve curriculum outcomes. Here are a few examples of how employees can reduce the risk of sustaining physical injuries at work:

- Include gentle warm ups and cool down stretches with each activity involving physical exertion;
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the activity;
- Demonstrate specific sporting techniques within your comfortable range of movement;
- Participate in sports within your limits – you don't need to play the whole game;
- Demonstrate particular dance moves at your own pace – students can then practice with music at a faster tempo; and
- Adjust your standing/sitting posture regularly throughout the work day and apply appropriate ergonomic and manual handling techniques.

If you have sustained an injury or illness, consult your doctor on whether you can safely perform physical activities related to your job and what precautions you should follow, eg. limit the intensity of your exercise.

By encouraging all employees to participate in physical activities at work within their level of physical capacity, we can minimise the number of employees sustaining injuries.

Useful Resources

Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace CD

JobAccess have recently released a new self paced training tool called *Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace* to assist people in gaining an understanding of mental illness and how people with mental illness can be supported in the workplace and wider community.

To obtain your FREE copy of the Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace CD Rom, contact a JobAccess Adviser on 1800 464 800. If you would like to use this for training at your school, you are able to request multiple copies at no cost.