

Submission
No 2

SECOND REVIEW OF THE LIFETIME CARE AND SUPPORT AUTHORITY

Organisation: Spinal Cord Injury Service
Hunter New England Health Service
Name: Mrs Kylie Jones
Date received: 6/05/2009

6 May 2009

Law and Justice Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Submission: Second review of the Lifetime Care and Support Authority

Please accept this submission of information to assist in the review of the Lifetime Care and Support Authority Scheme (LTCS). Please note, that although the scheme refers to people as 'participants', this submission will utilise the term 'clients'.

Our service provides community based rehabilitation to people (adults) who have sustained a spinal cord injury. The Spinal Cord Injury Service (SCIS) is a unit of Hunter New England Health Service (HNEH), NSW Health.

Since the inception of the scheme in 2007, our service provides rehabilitation to two (2) LTCS participants. Although this figure is small, we have encountered difficulties in navigating the scheme. These issues are stated below:

- The required documentation from the Authority is long and complex. Clinicians feel the documentation takes away time from providing direct clinical work. Documents can be repetitive. The need for various approval numbers can be confusing, particularly when Service Requests are required outside the normal plan period.
- Involving a Case Manager very early on is an appropriate move, however our service found that this changed our normal communication patterns and referral pathways with discharging inpatient facilities. We found that client discharges were ad-hoc and on one occasion, detrimental to the client. The client had a fall out of his wheelchair due to poor transfers. Our service was requested to urgently assess the person however our service was not aware of the discharged equipment or the capabilities of the client.
- The scheme does not allow for responsiveness of clinicians in times of clients' urgent needs. Due to the approval process and required documentation.

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- The requirements needed for 'Approved Assessors' are not clear. Particularly within the area of Home Modifications. Assessors in this particular area of work, can slow down the process of looking at suitable accommodation as it is not utilising skills of local clinicians with expertise in this area.

Ensuring clinicians are Approved Assessors targets the private sector as they have the capacity to travel the state, however the skills available at a local level may be far more advance and more direct.

- The area of 'Return To Work', which is a fundamental rehabilitation goal, has not fully been explored. When queried this area with the scheme, the answer received was there is no Return To Work Policy currently available. This also includes workplace modifications.

Although our service has encountered several working difficulties with the scheme, we do acknowledge that it has allowed greater access to resources and support to people with SCI injured in motor vehicle accidents. Although there are still areas that require further planning, the scheme does allow for the long-term complexities associated with this type of injury.

Many thanks

Kylie Jones
Service Manager
Spinal Cord Injury Service

Please note this submission has been lodged on behalf of the Spinal Cord Injury Service, Hunter New England Health Service and authorised by Mr Kim Nguyen - Senior Manager Community Services Greater Newcastle Cluster, HNEH.

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