

**INQUIRY INTO THE EXERCISE OF THE FUNCTIONS OF
THE LIFETIME CARE AND SUPPORT AUTHORITY AND
THE LIFETIME CARE AND SUPPORT ADVISORY
COUNCIL - FOURTH REVIEW**

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Date received: 10/08/2011

Department of Health Submission to the Fourth Review of the Lifetime Care and Support Authority

This submission addresses those recommendations relevant to the Department of Health from the Third Review of the Lifetime Care and Support Authority and the Lifetime Care and Support Advisory Council:

Recommendation 6

That the Minister for Health and the Minister for Finance enter into a memorandum of understanding or contract agreement clarifying the administration of LTCS revenue within the public health system, to ensure that money reimbursed for services is returned to the relevant health care units. In determining the most appropriate terms of that agreement, consultation should take place with the LTCSA and service providers, including those who have contributed to the Committee's Third Review on this issue.

The NSW Health position on this matter remains as previously provided in the response to a Question on Notice during the Second Review of LTCSA.

NSW Health has historically issued budgets to the public health services and requires the Chief Executives to then allocate budgets to individual hospitals, facilities and other units in order to meet local health needs. This approach facilitates local decision making which is consistent with the intent of the National Health and Hospital Reforms and the establishment of the Local Health Districts.

Recommendation 8

That the Lifetime Care and Support Authority improve the process for interim equipment hire and consider the suggestion put forward by the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Directorate to reduce the duplication of forms required by accepting original equipment orders as justification for hire.

Comment on this recommendation will be provided by the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Directorate, Agency for Clinical Innovation.

Recommendation 10

That the Lifetime Care and Support Authority ensure that sufficient information as to the reasons why a particular form of treatment, rehabilitation or service has been rejected is provided to the application maker, to enable them to understand the basis of the decision and to promote consistency.

NSW Health supports this recommendation, particularly in light of the recent Productivity Commission's draft report on Disability Care and Support, which references the Lifetime Care and Support Scheme as a potential model on which to base the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The draft report further proposes the use of "reasonable and necessary" (the same terminology used by LTCSA) as the criteria for determining what is provided.

NSW Health notes that LTCSA has updated some of its Guideline documents and continues to provide case study examples in its E-News to facilitate clarification of decision making.

NSW Health would like to bring the Committee's attention to the ongoing reform work being carried out by EnableNSW to ensure that consumers and prescribers have access to clear, consistent and transparent information about the eligibility criteria for specific assistive technology devices. EnableNSW has developed specific Prescription and Provision Guidelines for the assistive technology devices it provides and is currently finalising these guides following extensive consultation with stakeholders.

The NSW Government response to the draft report on Disability and Care Support notes that the report does not adequately define "reasonable and necessary" and recommends that this be explored fully prior to any pilot phase of the proposed scheme.

Recommendation 11

That the Lifetime Care and Support Authority consult with carers' advocacy groups to examine the feasibility of modifying the language used on the Lifetime Care and Support Authority website and in official publications when referring to the family of Lifetime Care and Support Scheme participants and providing clear information on the support services available for carers.

NSW Health supports Recommendation 11. The recommendation is in line with the NSW Carer Action Plan 2007 – 2012 and the NSW Carer (Recognition) Act 2010 which outline the need to recognise carers and to respect the relationship between carers and the persons for whom they care. The NSW Carer Action Plan defines a carer as "a family member, friend, neighbour or other community member who provides care and assistance to another person, often in a regular and sustained manner, without payment other than in some cases a pension or benefit".

GENERAL COMMENTS FROM NSW HEALTH

Following the completion of a shared project to address prescription processes, NSW Health and LTCSA continue to seek opportunities for collaborative work to improve the services to people with disability. During 2010 – 2011, collaborative work between EnableNSW and LTCSA has focused on the shared funding of a project to document evidence based guidelines to assist therapists in the prescription of a wheelchair (seated) or scooter for a person with traumatic brain injury and/or spinal cord injury.

This project has involved extensive consultation with national and international experts in the area as well as a systematic search for, and appraisal of relevant literature.

LTCSA and EnableNSW also share agency-specific expertise as required. For example, LTCSA will seek advice from the EnableNSW Advisors on matters where LTCSA does not have in-house expertise.

This includes:

- Advice from the EnableNSW Prosthetic Advisor on issues related to the provision of prosthetic limbs to LTCSA participants.
- Request for the EnableNSW Senior Advisor, Home Ventilation Program to be part of the evaluation panel during the recent LTCSA recent Tender for Attendant Care Providers.