



6 June 2014

Dear Colleagues

We would like to update you on the outcome of the recent negotiations with WorkCoverSA about the Psychology Fee Schedule. We have attached a number of documents to this correspondence (accessible on our respective websites), so that you can refresh your memory about the process. Most of these documents you have already seen, however some will be new. We have numbered the documents to enable you to have some idea in which order to read them. We have also attached documents in relation to the Return to Work (RTW) Services provided within the workers compensation arena, as these will be of interest to some Psychologists who work in this area. For those of you who do not provide RTW services, we urge you nonetheless to read up to and including Document 8, as there are some matters there that have impact for our profession more generally.

Please expect a letter from WorkCoverSA and the new Psychology Fee Schedule and Policy within the next week. The Fee Schedule will also be available on the Corporation's website. This Schedule will be applicable from 1 July 2014. It is important to note that the time bands for billing have been changed again. All services are now charged by the minute.

We are pleased to say that we did have some positive results from all our hard work; however we remain seriously concerned about some aspects of what is happening for our profession within the field of workers compensation. Please be assured that we have worked hard to represent your views and we will continue to maintain our dialogue with the Corporation. We would also like to thank those of you who assisted us in this work to date.

Regarding the positive outcomes, in particular, we are pleased with the insertion of the Neuropsychological Assessment and Report service. We are also happy that our representation was accepted to have the maximum number of billable hours for this service increased from what the Corporation originally proposed.

We hold significant misgivings however about a number of issues, not the least being the trend to see services provided by Psychologists attracting the same fee as other Allied Health Professionals and some Rehabilitation Consultants. At a time when Psychologists are expected to meet increasingly higher expectations regarding initial and on-going training and development and are subject to strict regulation, it is disappointing, to say the least, that this is not reflected in the Gazetted Fee Schedule.

We also note that there is now a disparity between our consulting fee and the fee we are paid to travel. We recommend you consider carefully whether you are prepared to travel outside of your consulting rooms.

Of note, we wish to signal to you our alarm with regard to the Vocational Assessment service having been removed from the Psychology Fee Schedule and moved to the Return to Work (RTW) Services Schedule. Given that all Psychology services provided within the workers compensation arena are expected to contribute to a return to work, it is hard to justify the Vocational Assessment service being singled out. We fear that there is nothing to stop other psychological services being removed in the future.



The implications of the Vocational Assessment service being moved from the Psychology Fee Schedule to the RTW Services Schedule may not be immediately evident to you all. Specifically, this means that any Psychologist who wishes to provide this service must be a contracted Workplace Rehabilitation Provider, meeting all relevant HWCA requirements, or must contract to or work for such a Provider. No longer will other Psychologists, independent of the rehabilitation industry, be able to provide this service.

In addition, a 2-tier system has been introduced for Psychologists providing this service. From 1 July 2014, a Psychologist working as a Class A RTW Service consultant will be able to charge at \$170.20 (travel at \$144.50) and those Psychologists working as a Class B RTW Service consultants will be able to charge a fee of \$138.50 (travel also at \$138.50). Note that fees for Psychologists working within this part of the system charge the same rate as every other RTW Service providers.

This correspondence also provides a good opportunity to make comment on the disappointing number of Psychologists who contributed their opinions about the movement of the Vocational Assessment service from the Psychology Schedule and into the RTW Services Schedule. There were also a number of comments from Psychologists who essentially said, *"I don't do offer this service so cannot comment"*. This too was most disappointing. As a profession, Psychology is vulnerable, especially if we do not stand together and take an interest in the profession as a whole. Self-interest and a lack of foresight will eventually see us all disadvantaged. It may be this time the Vocational Assessment that has been 'picked off' but next time (and the potential for there to be a 'next time' is high) it may just target an area in which you work. As Psychologists, we are skilled and experienced in reading complex documents and framing and expressing coherent opinions and supporting arguments. We urge you all to read and consider any documentation coming from the WorkCover Corporation and to exercise your skills and provide us with the ammunition we need to mount credible arguments to protect the entire profession.

Before we close, we would like to thank Carmel Wauchope for her work in the WorkCover negotiations over the past few years. Carmel is taking a well-earned break.

The IPPP and the APS in South Australia will continue to work closely together in respect to workers compensation matters and more broadly regarding other matters pertinent to our profession. Please feel free to contact either or both of us about any matter that you want to discuss or bring to our attention.

Yours sincerely

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