

**Ministerial review of the way Physiotherapy Services are Funded and
accredited by ACC – Draft report**

Response from the New Zealand College of Physiotherapy (NZCP)

Introduction

1.1 The New Zealand College of Physiotherapy (the College) is concerned with the promotion and recognition of postgraduate development of physiotherapists. We therefore welcome the Reviewer's acknowledgement of the potential benefits of recognising and utilising advanced physiotherapy practitioners. Recognition of advanced practice could add value for consumers of physiotherapy services, health professional colleagues, employers and purchasers of physiotherapy services. It would enable these groups to identify the most appropriate physiotherapists for delivery of the relevant rehabilitation service and potentially extend the services available for consumers.

1.2 The College wishes to comment on the following extracts from the Reviewer's draft recommendations.

Para 1.42 "the "advanced practitioner" concept is currently being examined by ACC"

1.3 We would like to reference the College's original written submission to the Reviewer that details the joint New Zealand College of Physiotherapy and New Zealand Society of Physiotherapists working party that is specifically considering the definition and role of an 'advanced practitioner'. We wish to highlight that work on the role and definition of advanced practitioners is currently being undertaken by the profession, not by ACC.

- 1.4 The working party is evaluating the College criteria for advanced practice against advanced practitioner criteria for physiotherapists and other health professionals documented in Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand.
- 1.5 The concept of an 'advanced practitioner' suggests a person who has relevant postgraduate qualifications, relevant clinical experience and who continues to update their knowledge and skills in the relevant area of specialty practice. Terms synonymous with 'advanced practitioner' include 'extended scope practitioner', 'specialist' or, within the HPCA Act, having a greater 'vocational scope of practice'. How an advanced practitioner is defined needs to be determined by the profession. How an advanced practitioner can be employed to enhance services and/or improve service delivery needs to be determined in consultation with employers and purchasers of physiotherapy services, including ACC.
- 1.6 The Advanced Practitioner Working Party will complete a discussion document which provides the basis for consultation with ACC (and other stakeholders) on the potential benefits of recognising advanced practitioners. The working party's discussion document will be available for consideration in late October 2007.
- 1.7 The College considers it extremely important that the profession lead development of the Advanced Practitioner status. Identification of appropriate criteria will require the most careful of clinical, ethical, academic, and profession-wide assessment to achieve a specification which meets the needs and aspirations of the profession, and has buy-in from the profession.
- 1.8 It is the profession itself through the College, which was specifically founded to foster such development, which must lead this project. The profession has the best physiotherapy-specific clinical, ethical and academic resources and

skills in New Zealand. It also has the best contacts with and most goodwill from the profession, which are vital to the success of the project.

- 1.9 The profession acknowledges that advanced practitioner status will gain maximum value through recognition from ACC, and potentially other funders such as Ministry of Health. The profession is therefore investigating the possibility of inviting an ACC representative onto the professional working party at the appropriate point. This will assist in ensuring that ACC is well informed of the process, and ACC's perspectives are fully understood in this development process.

Process for approving number of treatments to be funded by ACC

Para 1.44.4 (reiterated in paragraphs 9.27 and 9.33.4) –“Exploring the potential for identification of a group of advanced practitioners who would be authorised to approve additional treatments...”

- 1.10 The College has had preliminary discussions with ACC regarding a possible pilot, exempting College Full Members and Fellows from completion of ACC 32s. At this stage, approval to go ahead with this project, the purpose, the study methods and importantly the outcome criteria to be evaluated have yet to be established.
- 1.11 This raises a key issue. The purpose and outcomes of any evaluation studies need to be clearly articulated and agreed upon by both the service provider and service purchaser before commencement of any study. Otherwise the evaluation will have findings of little value, or at worst, may reveal misleading results. The Reviewer also supports this view regarding previous pilots and 'evaluations' that ACC has led with the physiotherapy profession.
- 1.12 The College therefore encourages partnership and dialogue with ACC on this and any such future initiatives using the established ACC Physiotherapy

Liaison Group or specific working parties as formal avenues for communication.

- 1.13 Again, any advanced practitioner status is likely to require practical assessment of its utility and practical application to any given role, through pilot studies and the like. This is also likely to be followed by effectively 'negotiating' with ACC as to the appropriate formal integration of any identified responsibilities into its contractual, remuneration and monitoring regimes.
- 1.14 These tasks are truly collaborative. The College believe they will best be achieved under the partnership approach outlined by the Reviewer, following the development of an initial advanced practitioner status under the leadership of the profession. The College asks the Reviewer to endorse such an approach.

Para 8.12 "alternative entry criteria for the EPN recognising that a certain level of postgraduate qualifications and experience may justify the same level of expectation of improved patient satisfaction and quality of treatment as certification."

- 1.15 The College supports adoption of alternative entry criteria for the EPN and is pleased that the Reviewer has commented on the notion of recognition of postgraduate qualifications and experience as a potential quality indicator. Again we hope that this can be considered further in a joint process, once the Advanced Practitioner Working Party's discussion document is complete.

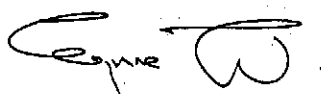
Summary

- 1.16 We appreciate that this Review is substantially about ACC funding and accreditation processes for physiotherapy. However the College hopes these comments provide useful information on current development of the Advanced Practitioner role and emphasise our request for continued partnership with ACC, through established communication channels, on any initiatives that may benefit from the inclusion of advanced practitioners.

- 1.17 Such partnership should in our view extend to working with the profession to identify appropriate pilot schemes, their goals and methodologies, and assessment of their outcomes. This should then follow through into a good faith negotiation of the contractual, remuneration and monitoring regimes to be applied by ACC.



Janice Mueller
Chair, Executive Council
NZ College of Physiotherapy Inc.



Lynne Taylor
Chair, Academic Advisory Board
NZ College of Physiotherapy Inc.

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