General Practitioner Participation in Return to Work Activities

This information sheet outlines how you can help support your patient to stay at or return to work after a workplace injury or transport accident.

The best way to support your patient to stay at or return to work is to keep everyone talking – the patient, the employer, the occupational rehabilitation (OR) or vocational provider and the WorkSafe Agent or TAC Claims Manager.

There are a number of ways you can help everyone to keep talking including:

- Use your consultation time to communicate with your patient and others to support getting back to or staying at work
- Participate in General Practitioner (GP) Return to Work Case Conference
- Make a phone call to the employer
- Visit your patient's worksite

GP Return to Work Case Conference

What is a GP Return to Work Case Conference?

A GP Return to Work Case Conference can improve return to work outcomes by facilitating early discussion and the development of an action plan for how everyone can assist your patient to stay at or return to work. Discussions should focus on what your patient can do and relate to supporting your patient to stay at or return to work. A GP Return to Work Case Conference is a meeting (either face to face, teleconference or video conference) involving a minimum of three participants. The case conference must include:

1. Your patient
2. You as the certifying GP
3. A WorkSafe Agent / TAC Claims Manager **or** OR / Vocational provider

Your patient's employer and / or support person may also participate in the case conference.

Location

A case conference can occur at your practice either face to face or by phone or video conference. Usually your patient will be in your rooms to participate in the conference.

How is a GP Return to Work Case Conference organised?

The WorkSafe Agent, a TAC Claims Manager or an OR / Vocational provider will usually invite you to participate in a case conference or you can ask them to organise a conference if you think that it would help to get everyone together to discuss your patient's return to work.

Alternatively, you can also organise and coordinate a Return to Work Case Conference yourself. This will involve you or your practice booking the appointments, coordinating the participants and documenting the minutes.

Your role:

If you are participating in the Return to Work Case Conference, it is recommended that you:

- Explain the nature of the conference to your patient and seek their agreement for you to participate in the conference;
- Record the details of the conference in the patient's medical records.

If you are organising and coordinating a Return to Work Case Conference, it is recommended that you:

- Do the activities outlined above for participation in a case conference and also;
- Obtain and record the patient's agreement for all of the participants to attend;
- Coordinate the invitations, bookings and confirmation of attendance by required participants;
- Document the minutes and provide this summary to all of the participants and discuss the outcomes with the patient.

Fee schedule and how to invoice

Once your patient's claim has been accepted, you can invoice the WorkSafe Agent or the TAC using the specific item numbers indicated on the GP Return to Work Activities Fee Schedule located at WorkSafe Fees A-Z or TAC Fee Schedules. The fee schedule reimburses you in line with the duration of the conference up to a maximum rate.

Return to Work Phone Call between GP's and employers

What is a return to work phone call?

A return to work phone call is a discussion over the phone between you and your patient's employer about getting back to or staying at work. The phone call can be initiated by either you or the employer and must only focus on ways to safely return your patient to work. It is important to talk to your patient about the purpose of the phone call, establish your patient's consent in accordance with your professional obligations and determine whether they will be present during the call or not.

When to use a return to work phone call?

You can call an employer at any time to discuss return to work. Some GPs make a phone call to the employer when they are completing the first certificate of capacity; others use phone calls to let employers know when they are changing their patient's certificate or if any barriers to return to work have been identified. It is recommended that you record the details of the phone call in the patient's medical records.

Duration

In most cases the return to work phone call should take no longer than 10 minutes. If a longer discussion is required, consider using a Return to Work Case Conference as an alternative to the return to work phone call.

Fee schedule and how to invoice

Once your patient's claim has been accepted, you can invoice the WorkSafe Agent or the TAC using the specific item number indicated on the GP Return to Work Activities Fee Schedule located at WorkSafe Fees A-Z or TAC Fee Schedules.

Return to Work Worksite Visit

What is a return to work worksite visit?

A return to work worksite visit is a visit by you to your patient's place of employment for return to work discussions and observations.

Your role

Before you conduct a return to work worksite visit, ensure that your patient and their employer agrees to the visit and are able to participate in any worksite discussions. You will need to document the visit in the patient's medical records but you are not required to complete a report following the worksite visit.

When to use a return to work worksite visit?

A return to work worksite visit can help you get a better understanding of the workplace when your patient is certified as having no capacity for work or with a capacity for suitable duties. It can help you to understand any restrictions or limitations that may be required for your patient to safely return to work.

What is discussed?

All information discussed at the worksite visit should be relevant to supporting your patient to stay at or return to work.

Location and duration

The return to work worksite visit will occur at your patient's place of employment and should take no longer than 90 minutes including travel time.

Fee schedule and how to invoice

Once your patient's claim has been accepted, you can invoice the WorkSafe Agent or the TAC using the specific item numbers indicated on the GP Return to Work Activities Fee Schedule located at WorkSafe Fees A-Z or TAC Fee Schedules.