

[REDACTED]

25 October 2013

Practice Manager
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] NSW [REDACTED]

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT [REDACTED] PHYSIOTHERAPY BENEFITS

Dear Sir/Madam,

In response to a number of recent enquiries, we are writing to clarify when [REDACTED] benefits are payable toward physiotherapy treatment (in particular Pilates and exercise classes). This letter provides you with information on:

1. our view on Pilates, including how it informs our approach;
2. common misunderstandings about our benefits; and
3. how our members can claim Pilates and other exercise classes.

1. [REDACTED]'s view on Pilates

Pilates exercises were not developed for, or by, physiotherapists as a specific clinical intervention for targeted diseases or injuries. Pilates classes have historically been delivered by Pilates instructors who are not clinicians, but people with a particular interest in exercise who are able to deliver safe and effective Pilates instruction.

We understand there is little evidence to suggest Pilates interventions are more effective than other physiotherapy interventions in the management of clinical conditions such as low back pain.

- Additionally, Pilates is not a core part of Physiotherapy courses that are taught in universities. Rather, undergraduates are informed of the potential use of Pilates exercises as a supplement to some physiotherapy interventions.

[REDACTED]'s view is that Pilates and Physiotherapy are fundamentally different streams of study and fundamentally different services. While Pilates can be used as a supplement to some physiotherapy treatment, it is not an intrinsic part of physiotherapy and so [REDACTED] treats it as a separate discipline in its own right.

This page is minimal relevance to this case

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2. Common misunderstandings about [redacted] physiotherapy benefits

Our physiotherapy benefits are determined by our Fund Rules, using Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) National Service Descriptors and on the understanding that both APHRA regulation and the Australian Physiotherapy Council guidelines are upheld.

We want to address the misunderstanding that [redacted] will pay a benefit towards Pilates or other exercise classes as a 'Group Consultation'.

It is our understanding that under the APA Service Descriptors a Group Consultation (item 560) must have three components to the treatment: (1) a pre-intervention assessment, (2) an individually designed intervention targeted to the specific patient that is reassessed in each consultation and (3) clinical record keeping.

We also believe a Group Consultation should include no more than 6 patients.

As Pilates and exercise classes typically do not accord with these requirements, [redacted] does not pay towards Pilates or other exercise classes using the Group Consultation item number (560).

[redacted] would also like to clarify a number of other misconceptions about the use of our physiotherapy benefits:

- **'Semi-private' consultations** – There is no industry agreed service descriptor of "semi-private" consultations and must not be billed as 500 or 505. We take this term to mean a group consultation and should be billed accordingly (provided the three components outlined above are satisfied);
- **Clinical record keeping** – We expect that clinical records as described by the Australian Physiotherapy Council Standards take place for both group and one-to-one consultations. Furthermore all physiotherapy treatment must have clear outcomes for each episodes of care; and
- **No benefit for fitness or wellness** – Physiotherapy benefits are only claimable when specific health conditions are being treated and not for reasons of fitness or wellness.

3. [redacted] benefits towards Pilates and other exercise classes

Whilst benefits for Pilates and exercise classes are not available under physiotherapy, [redacted] members with an eligible cover can claim a benefit towards the cost of Health Management Programs (including Pilates classes) where: (1) they are attending the classes to address a specific health condition and (2) their GP or medical specialist has prescribed such treatment to address or improve that specific medical condition.

[redacted] is a prudent health insurer that returns more back to its members in benefits than any other major health fund. As such we take care to manage these benefit payments in accordance with private health insurance legislation in order to deliver the greatest impact on the health outcomes for the broadest range of our members.

We hope that this letter clarifies the criteria for [redacted] physiotherapy benefits and thank you for continuing to deliver cost effective and sustainable treatment to our members.

If you have any questions, please call our provider relations team on [redacted]

Yours sincerely,

[redacted signature]

Ancillary

Benefits

Manager

Date of letter
25/10/13

\$150