

## NEW SOUTH WALES

# Private health fund imposing restrictions on a provider

Recently, an APA member had their access to [redacted] HICAPS claims suspended by the fund, despite working within the parameters of their HICAPS service. This member informed the APA which then contacted the fund. [redacted] indicated that, although the member's actions appeared to be conventional practice, the fund could place specific individual restrictions on any provider should they choose to. The APA directed the physiotherapist to appeal this with the fund.

Below is a summary from the physiotherapist:

I received a letter from the [redacted] Provider and Claims Compliance Officer notifying me that I was to cease using HICAPS for [redacted] members. No reason was given and the contents were confusing. Upon contacting the compliance officer, I was advised that my access to HICAPS was suspended and was not provided with any further details. I sent a formal letter requesting clarification of the reasons of my suspension.

The reason given was that I had breached HICAPS Terms and Conditions by processing claims for treatment that were provided on consecutive days to [redacted] members; that is, when patients attended physiotherapy two days in a row and the HICAPS claim was processed for both days on the second day, or when a treatment charge was processed through HICAPS the day after the treatment.

The compliance officer claimed that [redacted] requires HICAPS transactions to be processed on the day of the treatment only, although there was no reference to this in the [redacted] Terms and Conditions. They also claimed that I had breached HICAPS Terms and Conditions, which 'requires claims to be processed in a Cardholder's presence as soon as reasonably practicable after the related Health Service has been provided to the Cardholder'. On discussing this with HICAPS they agreed that I had not breached their Terms and Conditions.

It was not until I put my concerns in writing, including a request for a formal review of the decision, that I received further notice that I could continue using the HICAPS system until [redacted] had completed their investigation. I was subsequently informed I could continue accessing benefits through HICAPS.

The NSW PBA committee wishes to bring this situation to the attention of members and it would also like to hear from any members who have had similar treatment by funds; we believe these restrictions are unfair on the individual member and their

patients, who, until the restrictions were imposed, were operating within current HICAPS guidelines.

Any issues can be passed on to the NSW Branch via [jenny.robertson@physiotherapy.asn.au](mailto:jenny.robertson@physiotherapy.asn.au).

Gerard Lohan, APAM  
NSW Physiotherapy Business Australia committee

## The APA policy, advocacy and external relations team responds:

Some APA members have notified us that their patients were unable to claim from [redacted] for Pilates as item 560 (group physiotherapy consultation). In late December 2014, the APA contacted [redacted] to clarify the situation.

[redacted] advised that the purpose of its physiotherapy benefits is to provide towards physiotherapy treatment that addresses specific conditions. [redacted] has decided that it will only pay for group services when the service provided conforms to the APA service descriptors and for items that are covered under a person's extras cover. The APA's service descriptor for group physiotherapy requires pre-intervention assessment, individually designed interventions for each group participant, re-assessment and clinical record-keeping.

Based on these criteria, [redacted] has clarified that exercise classes for fitness, core strength or wellness are not claimable as either physiotherapy or through [redacted]'s Health Management Program. Exercise and Pilates classes, when they address or ameliorate a specific health condition, can be claimed through [redacted]'s Health Management Program.

## Free professional issues forum

Come along to our first free professional issues forum for the year on 15 April. The forum will explore different healthcare programs and includes three presenters: Amanda Mulcahy, APAM, Senior Program Officer, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and NSW Branch Council member; Matthew Williams, APAM, Physiotherapist/Musculoskeletal Coordinator.

causing issues

- McKinsey

- who audits the health funds.

business@bphysio.com.au