

Voice of the Customer

Improving the client experience of ACC's Pain Management Services

Consumer Outlook Group Update

May 2017



Every year, ACC supports around 10,000 people who experience pain following an accident. Many of these people never fully recover, so it's a lifelong relationship that is focused on trust, flexibility and tailored support.

In 2015, ACC's Pain Management Project Team began redesigning the Pain Management Service. The aim was to develop a service that delivered a more positive client experience and improved outcomes. The Pain Management Project Team presented to the Consumer Outlook Group (COG) in 2014. COG have validated the following consumer needs and made a number of points for ACC to consider in improving ACC's pain management services.

Services were not well known by case owners

Some case owners did not have detailed knowledge of the various pain management services and when it was appropriate to refer clients into these services.

ACC has implemented a screening tool so case owners can identify when pain is an issue, so they can discuss options with the client and refer them to the appropriate service at the right time. ACC has also developed a number of pain management resources such as ACC's service information sheet which describes the services, how to access them and where to get more information.

Services were not well understood by some medical professionals

ACC have been educating GP's on Pain Management services, this has also included sponsorship of New Zealand's Pain Conference and GP CME Conference. ACC has also built and maintained strategic partnerships with key health sector stakeholders such as the NZ Pain Society and the Royal College of GPs. Having strong partnerships with these organisations has resulted in more effective pathways for patients to access pain management services.

Assessments could be unreliable

Case owners and medical practitioners did not have the right tools they needed to best assess clients. This resulted in some clients not being referred to the right service at the right time.

ACC has implemented a new feature which allows direct referral to pain management from Primary Care Organisations (like medical centres.) ACC has also incorporated specific pain management pathways into existing systems such as Health Pathways and Map of Medicine.

Poor co-ordination between ACC, medical practitioners and clients resulted in poor client outcomes

ACC has provided internal resources for staff which outlines the policy, process and case scenarios which help staff identify what service is most appropriate for their client. This resource is available to all staff and supports consistent and fair decision making. Ensuring case owners have access to this resource means that clients in turn understand what services they are receiving and why.

ACC has also implemented learning and development modules for case owners to confidently have conversations with clients specific to pain.

Services did not meet the individual needs of the client, were inconsistent and did not cater to clients living in remote areas of New Zealand

The new service delivery model has moved from eight services to one. This means all providers now work under one model, which ensures consistent service across all regions. This also means all providers involved in a client's treatment work together to create a holistic treatment pathway. Providers therefore have an increased ability to deliver services based on the needs of each individual including their culture, and location.

The pain service also now includes telehealth. Telehealth allows increased access for clients to clinical services in remote locations.

Summary

These changes have improved ACC's pain management service and represent a significant change in the way ACC supports client with pain.

More information

For more information about the service visit acc.co.nz/pain. If you have any questions regarding the new service or would like to provide feedback, please email ACC at painmanagement@acc.co.nz.