



## Rehab "Cost Containment"

"Cost Containment" has become the latest "buzz word" in the rehabilitation and insurance industry. In order to effectively contain costs the insurance industry must take a serious look at what is costing the system unnecessarily, and develop a strategy for reducing or controlling abuse in the system.

The goal of a remuneration system for healthcare providers, therefore, must focus on returning individuals to their pre-injury function in a timely fashion. A system which pays higher remuneration to professionals who provide unnecessary treatment, or treatment for extended periods of time, effectively drives up the costs associated with lost wages. In order to minimize these costs, a system must be put

in place which affords health professionals a disincentive to provide unnecessary treatment. In order to establish a system that is subject to minimum abuse two important factors must be considered: Conflict of Interest and Remuneration for Health Care Professionals.

Conflict of interest is a growing problem in the rehabilitation industry. When proper Conflict of Interest legislation is not in place there lies a potential for unnecessary products to be recommended and/or treatment to be given.

Costs can also be more effectively controlled through the utilization of a fee schedule which encourages clinics to get people better and to teach them to become independent of health care.

In the case of rehabilitation, however, there are some alternatives to funding. As the client moves towards indepen-

dence less time with the physiotherapist should be required. This lends itself to a front loaded system for remuneration which is being used by some private rehabilitation firms across the country and by WCB in Alberta. This remuneration system provides fair reimbursement which is commensurate of the time that should be spent with a client if indeed the client is successfully moving towards independence at the clinic.

In order to effectively contain costs without jeopardizing quality and the rights of clients to choose where they receive treatment the system must look towards controlling system abuse. Then providers improve upon the cost-effectiveness of specific treatment protocols.

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