

# Better@Work



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## An ACC funded partnership between ACC, PHOs and local doctors to develop a service that will

- Support doctors to change the way they certificate time off work
- Support employers to have injured workers remain in or return earlier to the work place
- Support injured workers to recover at work
- Reduce average time off work

# Role of GPs

General practitioners are

- The gateway to time off work
- Key to workers expectations about being better off at work
- In need of assistance to support employers, especially small and medium sized employers, to assist injured workers to recover at work.



## Role of Better@Work Coordinator

- support injured workers to stay at or return to work in some capacity when medically appropriate.
- Review pre-injury duties; identify barriers to return to work.
- Contact employer.
- Worksite visit.
- Communicate with GP and ACC.
- Recommend required support.

# Better@Work Options

- Information
  - Definitions of terms e.g. “light” duties.
  - Investigate alternative duties or alternative hours options.
- Clinical support
  - Pacing and rebuilding tissue tolerance post injury.
  - Work station/ environmental/equipment assessment.
- Recommend Practical support
  - childcare, home help, taxis to and from work or equipment such as perching stools.

# Evaluation results: Clients

- Clients asked about satisfaction with the way the doctors talked to them about being at work with their injury; and about the Better@Work coordinator's help if they received it
- Findings from phone survey of clients (239 responses):
  - 9 out of 10 satisfied or very satisfied (87%)
  - 8 out of 10 satisfied or very satisfied with the coordinator (78%). Small sample of 23.
- Interviews with sample of clients:
  - Clients in B@W service very happy: a critical part of their return to work.

# Doctors

- Doctors interviewed (13)
  - Have changed the way they think about certification of time off work, and consequently how they discuss and set the expectations of their patients around time of work
  - Believe that injured workers should recover at work wherever possible
  - Have a very high level of trust in the coordinator to ensure the Better@Work plan is safe and effective

# Employers

- Employers interviewed (7)
  - Certification for light duties appears acceptable to employers.
  - light duties availability varies and can be dependant on employer skill and attitude.
  - Better@Work coordinator took time to explore all options and employers felt well informed by the process.

# Recovering at work

- NZIER Difference in Difference methodology applied to claims referred to Better@Work up to 31 December 2010.
- There is a statistically significant greater probability of getting a Fit For Selected Certificate issued and an abated weekly compensation paid.
- This means more workers are recovering at work because of Better@Work.
- Too early to see a statistically significant effect yet on number of weekly compensation days or amounts paid



# Expansion of prototype

- There are now five Primary Health Organisations delivering the prototype
  - To test different aspects e.g.: greater geographical area; urban setting with transport problems; urban setting with variety of primary care services
- Employers, Unions and the College of General Practice are advising ACC on the development of the prototype
- Expected to be evaluated in late 2010.

# Lessons Learnt.

- GPs
  - Simple form.
  - Needed to trust Better@Work coordinator.
- Employers
  - First role is running the business.
  - Don't want employees re-injuring.
- Employees
  - managing an injury.

# Discussion

- Changing culture.
- Managing the risk.
- Sustainability.
- What happens when there are no light duties.
  - Work Maintenance Program.
  - Activity based rehab.
  - Work trials.
  - Other placements.

# Case Study

- **Injury**
- Lumbar disc prolapse. Felt a 'pop' while lifting at work and then sudden pain in her back.
- **Occupation:**
- Nurse in a residential home.
- **ACC 18:**
- 8 hours/day, 5 days/week for a week.
- no lifting or forceful movements, no heavy work, no prolonged walking, no prolonged standing.



## Better@Work actions/outcomes:

- Discussion with employer and employer regarding options.
- Nurse went back initially for 4 hours reviewing and re-writing policies.
- Then moved on to working with a nursing assistant and increased hours to full 8 hours over 2 weeks.



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