



16 December 2008

Dear Doctor

WorkCover Medical Fees General Practitioners

New Fees Schedules for 2009

The WorkCover Board has approved new rates for medical fees, which are applicable for services provided on and after 1 January 2009.

The major changes from 1 January 2009 are:

- The hourly rate applicable for time-based work such as discussion with insurers, employers and rehabilitation providers for injury management purposes has been increased to \$218.40 per hour (plus GST).
- The maximum rates gazetted for medical consultations and procedures are as contained in the *AMA List of Medical Services and Fees* dated 1 November 2008, with the exception of some items that are not relevant to medical services provided to injured workers. The fee set for these services is nil and the relevant AMA Item Numbers are AA190 – AA320 (all time based General Practitioner fees items), AA500 – AA850 (enhanced primary care items) and AP050 – AP105 (telehealth items).
- The fee for the initial medical certificate has remained at \$16.00 plus GST.

A one (1) page summary of the main item numbers used by General Practitioners is attached.

New Arrangements for Medical Examination Reports

Following consultation with representatives of the Australian Medical Association, changes have been agreed to the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation (Medical Examinations and Reports) Fees Order 2009.

If a medical report is requested beyond the routine management reports that you provide following a consultation, the Medical Examination and Reports Fees Order 2009 applies. This Order defines a Medical Examination Report as **“an examination and report completed by an independent medical examiner or a treating medical practitioner where additional information is requested by either party (worker’s lawyer or insurer) to a potential or current dispute ... when the management reports available do not adequately address the issue”** and, describes revised criteria for standard, moderately complex and complex reports.

Schedule 1 of the Medical Examinations and Reports Fees Order 2009 lists maximum fees for medical reports provided by both treating general practitioners and independent medical examiners. Payment arrangements for medical examination reports are also included in this Fees Order, which states “The party requesting the report is to either:

- a. Agree the category of report being requested with the doctor and confirm the request in writing indicating that payment will be made within 10 days of receipt of a properly completed report and invoice; or
- b. Pay in accordance with a contractual arrangement between the medical practice and the referring body on receipt of a properly completed tax invoice.

The contractual arrangement cannot agree to a fee above the maximum fee prescribed in this Order”.

Requests and payments for reports by Scheme Agents and self and specialised insurers will be in accordance with Option A.



A full copy of the Medical Examinations and Reports Fees Order 2009 is available from the WorkCover website www.workcover.nsw.gov.au.

Resources for General Practitioners

WorkCover NSW is currently developing a number of resources designed to assist general practitioners who are treating patients in the NSW workers compensation system:

1. A **Medical Practitioners Guide to WorkCover** will be available in February 2009 in a hard copy format and as a series of Fact Sheets on the NSW WorkCover website.
2. **Education modules on the NSW workers compensation system and the management of common work related injuries** are currently being developed by the Office of Post Graduate Medical Education at the University of Sydney. These modules will attract Continuing Professional Development points from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and be available to you at no cost in 2009, in both on-line and face-to-face formats.

In 2009, WorkCover will also be conducting sessions for insurers in the workers compensation system, with the aim of providing education about the busy and diverse nature of General Practice and, encouraging consideration of this, when communicating with and requesting information from general practitioners.

If you would like to be advised when the new resources for general practitioners become available, or have any enquiries about medical fees please contact the WorkCover's Doctors' Hotline on 1800 661 111 or email doctorinformation@workcover.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Hawkins'.

Mary Hawkins
Director
Provider Services Group
Workers Compensation Division