

Submission to SIRA re Model of Care for the Management of Low Back Pain - Summary July 2023

Documents and materials reviewed

Model of Care for the Management of Low Back Pain - Summary July 2023

Managing low back pain information for patients

Model of Care Management of people with acute low back pain 2016

Workers compensation guide for allied health practitioners - SIRA

(nsw.gov.au) www.sira.nsw.gov.au/information-search/health-care-providers

About allied health care | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care www.health.gov.au/topics/allied-health/about

Point 1

In Model of Care for the Management of Low Back Pain - Summary July 2023

The primary care team members are now listed as
the patient and their family

The treating general practitioner and practice nurse
treating allied health providers

In the previous 2016 edition, the primary team members are the patient and their family and their GP, practice nurse and physiotherapist.

I recognise the importance of other treating health professionals that may be required in primary care e.g. psychologist. However, the term “allied health providers” has a much broader inclusion that refers to practitioners that are not relevant in the context of management of low back pain.

For example, according to the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care’s definition of “allied health profession”, it includes providers such as optometrists which are not relevant in the context of management of low back pain.

Proposed amendment 1: Change “treating allied health providers” to “relevant treating allied health providers”

In the “Model of Care Management of people with acute low back pain 2016”, the primary team members are the patient and their family and their GP, practice nurse and physiotherapist.

For better consistency with the previous edition and to recognise the psychological domain of primary care apart from the physical domain,

Proposed amendment 2: add “e.g. physiotherapists and psychologists ” after “treating allied health providers”

I.e change “treating allied health providers” to “relevant treating allied health providers e.g. physiotherapists and psychologists ”

Point 2

In Model of Care for the Management of Low Back Pain - Summary July 2023

“Principle 6: Active physical therapy encouraged
Consultation with team members may include an allied health practitioner or practice nurse.”

I reiterate the use of “an allied health practitioner” can be misleading to readers. For example, an allied health practitioner such as an optometrist is not conventionally required in the context of management of low back pain.

As per SIRA’s definition of “Approved allied health professional”, an allied health professional includes mental health social workers. We recognise the importance of mental health social workers in primary care. Nevertheless, this should not be included under “Principle 6: Active physical therapy encouraged” since their scope of practice is not generally relevant to physical therapy.

Proposed amendment 3

Suggestion 1 :

change “Consultation with team members may include an allied health practitioner or practice nurse.” to “Consultation with team members may include a physical therapy practitioner or practice nurse”

Suggestion 2:

change “Consultation with team members may include an allied health practitioner or practice nurse.” to “Consultation with team members may include a physical therapy practitioner e.g. physiotherapist or exercise physiologist.”

Point 3

There is no definition of what ‘evidence based physical therapies’ are for the management of LBP and which profession have a full scope of practice to provide this.

The evidence does not exist for any other physical allied health profession and that the evidence cannot be applied nor transferred to other health professions due to the difference in training

Yours faithfully
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