

14 June 2013

Mr James Sullivan
fyi-request-881-9ea62485@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Sullivan

Official Information Act Request

I refer to your request of 21 May 2013, seeking information under the Official Information Act 1982 (Act). You asked ACC to provide:

“...a list of all treatments that the ACC funds under the category of Alternative Medicine. Such items can include acupuncture, homeopathy and traditional Chinese medicine. But are not limited to just this. This category of treatments can also be known by the names of Holistic Medicine, and Integrative Medicine.

I would also like to request a summary of what processes and requirements the ACC uses to measure the effectiveness of every alternative medicine that is funded.”

ACC can contribute towards the cost of services for the following treatment providers or registered health professionals:

- Acupuncturist
- Audiologist
- Chiropractor
- Clinical dental technician
- Counsellor
- Dental technician
- Dentist
- Medical laboratory scientist
- Medical practitioner
- Medical radiation technologist
- Midwife
- Nurse
- Nurse practitioner
- Occupational therapist
- Optometrist
- Osteopath
- Pharmacist
- Physiotherapist
- Podiatrist
- Speech therapist.

ACC does not have a separate list of funded treatments considered alternative medicines. Of the above treatment providers, acupuncturists may be considered as falling into the category of alternative medicine. However, each provider may use elements of alternative or holistic/integrative medicine in their approach. For example, a physiotherapist may use acupuncture alongside other treatments in a treatment programme, such as exercise therapy and mobilisation.

ACC pays for treatment to the above providers in accordance with the following criteria. The treatment must be:

- for a covered injury
- necessary and appropriate
- of the quality required
- given at the appropriate time and place, with only the appropriate number of treatments necessary
- provided by an appropriately qualified treatment provider holding a current annual practising certificate.

When considering whether the above criteria apply to a client, ACC must take into account:

- the nature and severity of the injury
- the generally accepted means of treatment for such an injury in New Zealand
- the other options available in New Zealand for the treatment of such an injury
- the cost in New Zealand of the generally accepted means of treatment and of the other options, compared with the benefit that the client is likely to receive from the treatment.

With respect to processes and requirements for measuring effectiveness, Treatment Profiles have been developed for 150 common injury types. Treatment Profiles are guides to the treatment and rehabilitation services ACC expects a practitioner to provide to a client for a particular injury. They describe current 'good practice' and what outcomes should be achieved.

ACC also uses treatment trigger numbers, which indicate the number of treatments a client with a particular injury is able to receive before the provider is required to seek prior approval. More information regarding treatment and rehabilitation guidelines can be found in the Treatment Provider Handbook.

The Treatment Profiles as well as the Treatment Provider Handbook can be downloaded from ACC's website www.acc.co.nz.

Please contact me on adam.houppermans@acc.co.nz if you would like to discuss this letter. I will be happy to answer any questions or, if you have any concerns, work with you to resolve these.

If you are still not happy, you may make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. You can call them on 0800 802 602, 9am to 5pm weekdays, or write to:

The Office of the Ombudsman
P O Box 10 152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely

Adam Houppermans
Advisor