

8 August 2013

Gladys Webster
fyi-request-837-2e58d4b5@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Webster

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your request of 9 July 2013, asking for the following information about ACC policies when it becomes aware of a Medical Council ruling about an assessor.

You asked:

'...what policy does ACC have in place around the harm caused by their assessors (when a Medical Council ruling is finally obtained) to sensitive claimants?'

ACC engages the services of appropriately qualified and registered medical professionals. ACC expects that they will provide a high quality of professional care when carrying out independent assessments in line with relevant professional guidelines and standards.

The Medical Council (the Council) ensures doctors are fit to practice by considering their conduct, competence and health. The Council can impose conditions on a doctor's practice, or suspend them from practicing entirely.

Depending on the actions taken and conditions placed on the doctor by the Council, ACC may:

- commence a performance management plan, with time-framed goals and consequences if these are not met
- suspend all new referrals, pending a statement of good standing from the Council
- increase monitoring of existing clients or remove them from the provider's workload, pending a statement of good standing from the Council
- review all submitted assessment reports over a stipulated period, to ensure they are of good quality and have clients reassessed by another provider if deemed necessary
- enforce conditions for future payment for services (i.e. dependent on review of clinical management/documentation to ensure it meets all necessary criteria)
- suspend contracts pending a statement of good standing from the Council
- suspend ACC registration, with all clients removed from their workload, pending reactivation
- cancel any contracts (and ACC registration), with all clients removed from their workload.

It is important to appreciate that any actions taken by ACC will be proportionate to the recommendations made by the Council. It would be inappropriate for ACC to place limits on the scope of practice of an assessor if the Council did not consider those limits to be necessary when it made its recommendations.

Please note that the information above applies to all doctors, not only those that assess clients with sensitive claims.

Please contact me at hugh.mcilraith@acc.co.nz if you have any queries regarding this letter.

If you're 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
PO Box 10 152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



Hugh McIlraith
Advisor, Government Services