

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Medical Case Conference

### 1 What is a case conference?

Case conferences are formal meetings between an injured worker, treating medical practitioners, employer and claims manager. They may also include a treating allied health provider and return to work service provider. Case conferences are a vital element in the collaborative return to work planning for injured workers.

### 2 Who can request a case conference?

A case conference can be requested by a claims manager, the treating medical practitioner, an approved return to work service provider, a workers representative, a worker or employer. The worker or their representative must always be invited to attend the case conference.

### 3 When are they held and why are they important?

Case conferences can be held at any time during the life of the claim. They are held to discuss updates regarding: current and future treatment, capacity for work, prognosis, identification of barriers that could affect return to work, referral to return to work services, details of limitations to work and recommendations facilitating a return to work. They are important to discuss and resolve barriers and set expectations, as well as ensuring that collaboration continues throughout the claim.

### 4 Can they be conducted virtually or over the telephone?

Case conferences can be conducted face to face, by video or over the telephone, with face to face preferred if circumstances permit.

### 5 Where are they held?

Case conferences are usually held at the treating medical practitioner's medical practice, either in the consulting room or a larger meeting room, however they can also be conducted at any mutually convenient pre-arranged location for example, the worksite.

### 6 What if I would like to speak with and examine my patient prior to the case conference?

Medical practitioners are able to have a consultation with the worker prior to the case conference. This appointment would be paid for by RTWSA in the same way as other consultations with workers whose claim has been accepted.

### 7 What can I expect from the case conference?

A claims manager will contact the medical practice to book a case conference with the practice manager and ensure they have approval. Before the case conference occurs, the claims manager must ensure that all attending parties including the worker are formally notified of the details. This should include a list of attendees, the purpose of the meeting and a list of topics that will be discussed. It is expected the treating medical practitioner will actively participate in the case conference, including discussing any topics that they would like to raise.



**8** Is a claims manager permitted to attend an appointment that has not been booked as a case conference?

Claims managers can request to be admitted during medical reviews or appointments that are not case conferences. The worker and the medical practitioner both need to agree for the claims manager to be allowed to attend. Expectations of the role of the claims manager during a consultation should be discussed prior to the appointment.

**9** What are the desired outcomes of the case conference?

Depending on the circumstances, the following outcomes should be expected:

- Clarification of the current capacity to undertake duties and discussion about expected increase of capacity including timeframes
- Confirmation of current and future treatments or services and expected benefits to the injured worker's recovery
- Discussion about barriers that may have been identified (industrial/personal) and plan interventions that may be undertaken to address those barriers
- Update on how a return to work, treatment or any other topic that has been previously raised in a case conference is progressing

A summary can be provided at the request of the treating medical practitioner. If the treating medical practitioner provides the summary to all attendees, this can be charged at the gazetted rate in the ReturnToWorkSA Fee Schedule.

**10** Can a case conference go ahead without the injured worker being present?

It is ideal for the worker to be involved in a case conference as the focus is on a collaborative approach to recovery and return to work. However there may be circumstances where an injured worker may not attend (i.e. video viewing of worker's duties) and these meetings are referred to as Third Party Consultations. It is the responsibility of the claims manager or self-insured employer to ensure a written and signed record of the third party consultation is distributed to all attendees. Should any amendments be made regarding the worker's limitations, capacity or any options regarding return to work, the treating medical practitioner must consider the injured worker's input.

**11** Can a treating medical practitioner charge for a case conference?

Yes, attendance at a case conference or third party consultation can be charged by a treating medical practitioner at the gazetted rate in the ReturnToWorkSA Fee Schedule.

**12** How much time should I allocate for a case conference?

Depending on the nature of the issues needing to be addressed, we recommend setting aside at least 1 hour for a case conference. Should there be more issues needing to be addressed, longer time may be required.