

MEDIA RELEASE

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icare PILOT SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES TREATMENT APPROVAL TIMEFRAMES

A new pilot targeting faster treatment for injured workers has cut treatment approval times from up to six weeks to an average of just four days for more than 100 workers so far involved in the pilot.

icare's 12-week [Medical Support Panel \(MSP\) pilot](#), which has run since mid-May 2017, is trialling how a credible panel of medical specialists can improve outcomes for injured workers, ensuring that they get the treatment that they need sooner.

[icare](#) Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Chris Colquhoun said the speed of decision-making achieved in the pilot to date was exactly the outcome icare was looking for.

"The trial has already shown a strong evidence base at the halfway mark, meaning injured workers get their treatment faster", Dr Colquhoun said.

"Through this pilot, we're providing our case managers with credible medical recommendations to help them make more informed decisions when it comes to the whole-person health and wellbeing of injured workers.

"The recommendations provided by the Medical Support Panel are evidenced-based, tapping into the most current global medical practices and recommended treatment pathways for different types of injuries", he said.

Interim outcomes of the pilot include:

- Time to decision for injured workers reduced from an average of 30 days to 4 days.
- 73 per cent of new treatment requests reviewed by the MSP were supported.
- Just 12 per cent of cases referred to the MSP were referred to an Independent Medical Examination (IME) for review.
- Of the remaining cases, injured workers may have received a different treatment recommendation or new case strategy, after agreement was reached with all relevant stakeholders, including the injured worker and treating doctor.
- All cases reviewed got to a decision in an average of 4 days.

The focus for the MSP is to support faster treatment approvals where possible. In cases where there is insufficient information to recommend approval, the case is referred to an IME.

"While the pilot still has a way to go these preliminary results show that a small step in how we approach claims management can make a big difference to people's outcomes", Dr Colquhoun said.

"In a number of cases, the medical panel collaborated with the injured worker, treating doctor and case manager to reach agreement and recommend a different treatment pathway than that originally proposed. This is evidence that the panel not only ensures workers receive treatment faster, but also receive the best treatment for their circumstances.

"The results are compelling and tell us that by focusing on the customer needs as opposed to process, we can achieve extraordinary outcomes", he said.

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About icare

icare (Insurance & Care NSW) is the insurance and care provider for NSW. We insure 3.4 million workers, motorists and builders and 284,000 employers. For more information, visit: www.icare.nsw.gov.au

How icare's Medical Support Panel pilot works

- icare's Medical Support Panel provides guidance, medical case support, case resolution strategies and recommendations to case managers and other key support staff who may not have a medical background, within no more than 5 business days.
- The medical professionals on the panel are occupational health physicians and psychiatrists, currently in clinical practice, with experience in the NSW Workers Compensation scheme requirements
- Under the trial, the panel's doctors have been able to fast-track approval times by proactively communicating with workers, treating doctors, case managers and IMEs. The pilot will run for a further 6 weeks to mid-August 2017. icare will evaluate the overall value of the panel to injured workers and update stakeholders on the next steps to more broadly operationalise the outcomes in coming months.