

ACCESS – COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND TRANSPORT
Professional Issues Forum
25 July 2006
WFOT 2006 Congress

Julie Cameron (University of Sydney) & Rebecca Rogers (Department of Veteran's Affairs, Australia) co-facilitated this forum and prepared the following report.

Approximately 25 participants attended this forum. Participants were mainly from Australia.

The participants identified the following as being issues for Occupational Therapists in this practice area:

1. confusion re legislation regarding hand held showers i.e. conflict with electrical standards
2. safe housing for children
3. OT role in establishing the standards for public access and housing
4. patient involvement in design
5. influence of technology in design
6. balance between professional liability / patient need and cost
7. adaptable housing / universal/ lifelong housing
8. OT consultants within housing department
9. discussion re OT standards manual re housing
10. safe fixing of mobility devices in vehicles
11. reliability of transportation for patients
12. no funding for child under 6 re housing modifications.
13. housing standards for paediatrics
14. funding for home modifications
15. council responsibility / involvement in community access
16. liability / safety / funding for / access to car
17. air travel policy of airlines
18. access to equip for trial in remote areas
19. standard guidelines for reporting home modifications

As time did not allow discussion of all topics raised, participants were asked to prioritise topics. The following topics were discussed:

TOPIC 1

The balance between professional liability / patient need and cost

Points raised included:

- boundaries for OT responsibility e.g. home visit requirement, level of detail in recommendations for modifications
- differences in approach internationally e.g. Canadian, NZ recommend rails but not with specifications...refer to local standards, provide builder contact and becomes builders liability
- different principles or issues for minor modifications and structural / major modifications.
- Extent of professional liability? Document decisions – problem, recommendation and within standard practice.
- Risk management re transport, equipment is increasingly important (and time consuming) – documentation is not sufficient within context of hospital / health dept
- NZ experience – assessors are being too prescriptive / too rigid following the standards rather than consider alternative solutions

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Education of assessors and providers of home modifications re: when are standards mandatory, when is it reasonable to vary from standards, considering alternative solutions
- Keeping an eye on who is the client – not the service / providers
- Would agreement and client involved decision making, signed and contracted, provide legal protection?
- More coordinated and consistent approach with home modification services (NSW)... This is our policy and process.
- International connections to discussion issues and how others have solved the issues e.g. listserves. Could HMMInfo add what is already available so others can access?

TOPIC 2

The influence of technology in relation to access.

Issues raised included:

- What is happening at a global level re technology?
- Tension between funding and cost of products available / level of technology e.g environmental control units
- Could move beyond this level of technology e.g. smart housing needs to be considered in conjunction with funding, education in how to use. Tension between the many needs/ requirements of stakeholders e.g.
- Monitoring type systems in homes is raising privacy issues in USA

SOLUTIONS discussed

- Need for education programs that are evidence based and best practice available to practicing Occupational Therapists...e.g Universities, Independent living centre, OT assoc
- Lobby more effectively and efficiently for funding