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To all Allied Health Professionals

OVERSERVICING, OVERCHARGING AND FEE SPLITTING

We refer to the recent media coverage on alleged insurance fraud involving physiotherapists, doctors and others.

2 The Allied Health Professions Council (AHPC) would like to highlight the AHPC's Code of Professional Conduct ("the Code") with regard to overservicing, overcharging and fee-splitting with other healthcare professionals or with third parties.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Act in the best interest of patient and the public

3 Allied Health professionals must conduct themselves with honesty and integrity, and act in the best interest of patients and the public. As set out in section 1.4, they should "not provide more services than required except where requested for by, and/or agreed with, your patient, and within the principles set out in section 5 of the Code."

Accurate advertising and not induce unnecessary demands for services

4 As set out in Section 5, Allied Health professionals must not induce their patients to acquire more services than are required. They must ensure that any advertising or information provided to the public about themselves and their services are truthful, factual and accurate and does not have unsubstantiated or embellished claims in relation to a product, service or treatment.

5 Section 5.5 of the Code states that Allied Health professionals must not provide package deals, discounts or coupon discounts for professional services rendered should these provisions induce patients to acquire more services than are required. Section 5.6 states that you must allow reimbursements if your patients do not require or do not agree to subsequent services during the course of the package purchased. Section 5.7 deals with conflicts of interest and such conflicts including financial interest in an organisation or service must first be disclosed to your patient before a referral is made to such organisation or service for treatment or investigations.

6 As Allied Health professionals, we must not sacrifice objective clinical judgment for business or financial considerations. Doing so violates the trust placed by the patient in our profession to practise ethically, and constitutes a breach of professionalism and professional ethics even if the patient agrees to pay the fees charged or undergo the procedures recommended.

Maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour

7 As set out in Section 11, Allied Health professionals must practise with honesty and personal integrity at all times. In your professional capacity, you should not partake in any form of marketing and sales of products and services which are not in keeping with the practices of your profession. This includes marketing and sales of products and services which are unrelated to the practice of your profession when you are acting in your professional capacity.

Abide by all laws and regulations governing practice and Code of Professional Conduct of your profession and the Council

8 As set out in Section 12, Allied Health professionals must keep to the laws and regulations of their profession and of the Council and report any breach in such laws and regulations of other healthcare professionals or colleagues to the Council.

9 All registered Allied Health professionals are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct at all times so that we do not compromise patient safety and well-being, and/or bring disrepute to the profession.

10 Should any complaint be received from patient, member of the public or public servant regarding unprofessional and unethical practices or offences by registered Allied Health professionals, the Council shall refer such complaint or offence to the Chairman of the Complaints Panel or to the Disciplinary Tribunal to be dealt with.

Thank you for your kind attention.



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REGISTRAR
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