

New and Extended Equipment and Modification Services

May 2008

The Ministry of Health has recently approved the funding guidelines for several new and extended services. These extended services have been made possible following the additional funding for Environmental Support Services announced in Budget 2007.

These funding guidelines, outlining who may be able to get these services, are now published on the Accessable <accessable.co.nz> and Disability Funding <disabilityfunding.co.nz> websites. These guidelines will replace the previously published sections in the Equipment Manual.

The Ministry of Health acknowledges the support from the Professional Advisory teams at Enable New Zealand and Accessable and the many clinicians, members of the EMS Technical Advisory Network and organisations during the development of these funding guidelines. All new services will be available for access from Monday 12 May, so that disabled people can benefit from them as soon as possible.

These services are:

Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT)

This includes visual or vibrating alert systems (e.g. visual smoke alarm) for Deaf, Deafblind and hearing impaired people to ensure that they are able to live at home safely. A series of workshops for people working in this field were held late last year. They were attended by Hearing Therapists working for LIFE Unlimited Hearing Therapy Services, Service Co-ordinators working for Deaf Association and Deafblind services at the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind and some audiologists.

The new guidelines will replace section 10.3 in the Equipment Manual.

Postural Management

Seating to Go undertook a series of training workshops for therapists who are working with children and adults who have a significant physical disability and could benefit from additional support when lying down (or in a position other than sitting). The previous accreditation area of *Seating* has now been extended to cover all areas of postural management:

- *Lying (LYG)*
- *Sitting (SE1, SE2, SE3)*
- *Standing (STD)*

144 therapists attended these workshops and considerable positive feedback was received about them. All therapists who wish to submit applications to Accessable or Enable New Zealand for lying supports such as sleep systems will need to complete the two-day training workshop and also have accreditation in Sitting Level 3. Two further workshops are planned for 2008/09 and subsequent years. These workshops are funded by the Ministry of Health and are provided free of charge to DHB therapists. Please contact Seating to Go if you would like to know more about these workshops; seating.to.go@xtra.co.nz

The new guidelines will replace sections 10.8 (Standing) and 10.9 (Seating) in the Equipment Manual

Communication Assistive Technology (CAT)

Funding for equipment and training to support people to communicate more effectively in their daily lives has been increased. New guidelines have been prepared with assistance from key people involved in this area of work, and these will be published by the end of April.

The accreditation areas of Communication and Information and Communication Processing have been changed to:

- *Face to Face Communication, and*
- *Written Communication*

The new guidelines will replace sections 10.8 (Communication) and 10.9 (Information and Communication Processing) in the Equipment Manual.

A number of training workshops are being planned for those working with people who have communication difficulties and these will be delivered by members of the Assistive Technology Alliance of New Zealand (ATANZ). The workshops, funded by the Ministry of Health, will be held in main centres across the country starting in June this year and there is no cost to attend.

ATANZ will be sending information out to interested people about these workshops as their timetable is confirmed. Please contact Ann Smaill, Chairperson, ATANZ Trust, if you would like to know more about these workshops; ann.smaill@talklink.org.nz.