



## **Notice to Specialised Assessors Ministry of Health Funding for Suction Type Hand Rails**

After careful consideration, **Enable New Zealand** and **accessible** have made a nationally consistent decision to decline Ministry of Health funding requests for the provision of suction type hand rails to meet a long term disability related need.

Some of the issues impacting on the decision are:

- Suction rails have been described as an equipment option providing partial support to assist the user and good for temporary installations. They must be fixed to non-porous surfaces and do not require permanent fixed installation.
- There is no guarantee that the rail will be used for its intended purposes as a partial support and they are not designed to hold or support the user's full body weight.
- There is insufficient evidence that suction rails are a safe solution for long term use, to meet long term disability needs.
- There is good evidence that if standard permanent rails are installed correctly then the client is safe. The same reassurance cannot be provided for the suction rail.
- Suction rails require on going maintenance involving releasing of the suction cups, cleaning of the surface/suction cups and then re-suction of the rail. This potentially leads to incidents of poor installation if multiple people/caregivers are doing this maintenance. Standard rails once installed correctly, do not need this maintenance.
- There is no known way of testing the product to evaluate whether it is safe for re-issue, therefore **Enable New Zealand** and **accessible** would not consider having the product in the re-issue equipment pool.