



Notice to Specialised Assessors regarding Ministry of Health funding for Suction Type Handrails

As of August 26th 2008, after careful investigation and consideration, Enable New Zealand and Accessable 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 outlined below:

- 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 the rail will be used for its intended purpose as a partial support and they are not designed to hold or support the users 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 ongoing maintenance involving releasing of the suction cups, cleaning the surface/suction cups and then re-suction of the rail. This could potentially lead 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 Accessable would not consider having the product in the reissue equipment pool