

# AMA helps in recontracting with WorkSafe/TAC patients

While fees for treating WorkSafe and TAC patients fail to keep up with rising costs, there are ways practices can review their billing practices to allow them to continue to treat, while managing costs. Workplace & Advocacy Unit Director Geoff O’Kearney considers the options.

The treatment of compensable patients (particularly those covered by WorkSafe Victoria (WorkSafe) and the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) grows more complex as time goes by.

Medical practitioners must pay attention not only to the presenting clinical condition, but also to the following issues:

- rehabilitation of the acute injury (and any resulting chronic condition)
- managing the patient’s concerns about payment from WorkSafe/TAC for such treatment
- addressing the practitioner’s concerns about appropriate payment by WorkSafe/TAC

- preparation of medico-legal reports to justify medical treatment, including providing evidence in court in some instances.

AMA Victoria has long argued for an independent review of medical rebates for patients with WorkSafe and TAC claims. Rebate levels paid in Victoria are amongst the lowest in the country [do we have a reference for this?]. Although this correlates with lower employer premiums, AMA Victoria continues to campaign for higher proportions of rebates relative to premiums.

In this regard, doctors may consider the following billing options:

- bill patients, employers or WorkSafe/TAC at rebate rates –

this has the advantage of ensuring that patients receive compensation that is equal to published rates

- following informed financial consent, to bill patients for the true cost of medical treatment – this has the advantage of reflecting the true cost of treatment, and allows practices to function in a financially prudent and responsible manner.

AMA Victoria has developed information and templates which may be used by doctors and medical practices to facilitate billing processes. These are available for download at [www.amavic.com.au](http://www.amavic.com.au), under “Private Practice”.

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