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Training Package Review

The Massage Therapy Subject Matter Expert Group (SMEG) met on 18 October to review the pre- Draft 2 units of competence for the Certificate IV in Massage Therapy Practice and the Diploma of Remedial Massage. The contribution of the Victorian Network was strongly reflected in the Draft 2 units put up for consideration at this meeting.

There was substantial discussion of the key issue of supervised practice (hours and number of clients), and what constitutes a valid assessment. There will be scope in the current review to be more prescriptive about assessment conditions so this is a great opportunity to tighten up some loopholes and get it right.

The Industry Reference Group for CAM is scheduled to meet on November 20 to discuss cross-modality issues.

The Draft 2 version of qualifications will be refined in early December and then released for consultation for two months from the end of January through to the end of March 2014. Final draft will be developed by May 2014 and submitted for endorsement by the end of 2014.

Obviously, the next significant window for engagement will be with the release of Draft 2 at the end of January. Please stay tuned!

Medibank update

As you are aware, Medibank closed their books to new providers and new provider locations on September 1. The Associations have been in an ongoing dialogue with Medibank to find a way forward for ongoing recognition of remedial massage therapists.

Medibank has been finalising their new requirements for nearly three months. They have advised that they will be implementing changes via an addendum to the existing agreements between Medibank and the associations. Although Medibank circulated a draft list of provisions in early August for consideration, it is still largely unclear what the final requirements will be.

On October 22, four of the Associations (AMT, AAMT, ATMS and ANTA) met with Medibank and representatives from the CSHISC and ASQA to discuss the AQF, CBT and RTO standards. The intent of the meeting was, in part, to inform Medibank of the context in which training package qualifications are delivered and assessed, and the roles of the various bodies in establishing, monitoring and enforcing standards.

AMT gathered some data and feedback from RTOs prior to the October 22 meeting to provide an evidence-based platform for the discussion. We were grateful for the input we received. We were also grateful for the contribution from both the CSHISC and ASQA representatives, who provided some much-needed background on training packages, the nature of competency-based training and the role of the VET regulator.

The difficulty is that Medibank looks set to try to devolve responsibility for RTO delivery and assessment standards on to the Associations. Accessory to that is the expectation that Associations can make quality assessments and monitor training on the basis of hours of delivery and duration of training as the main criteria.



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AMT has consistently tried to point out the pitfalls of this proposed approach to Medibank. We remain concerned that any requirement for Associations to put forward “white” or “black” lists of RTOs is not only outside our scope and authority but is also not an effective, ethical or valid way to tackle the problems underscored by Medibank.

At this stage, AMT awaits confirmation from Medibank of the precise nature of the requirements we will be asked to sign on to. The only thing we can say with any confidence is that, if we are asked to comply with something that we cannot do effectively, authoritatively or ethically, we will not be signing on to the addendum.