

# Home Care reforms information series

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Welcome to the 12th edition of LASA's newsletter on home care reforms. The newsletter is published monthly and is also available on our [website](#) along with previous editions. If you have specific topics or questions you would like addressed in future editions, please email [homecare@lasa.asn.au](mailto:homecare@lasa.asn.au). The purpose of this newsletter is to inform and support members in response to current issues that have emerged with implementation of the [Increasing Choice Home Care](#) reforms (IHC) on 27 February 2017.

## DEPARTMENT WEBINAR – HOME CARE REFORMS AND ONGOING IMPROVEMENT

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The Department of Health (DoH) has conducted its second webinar after introduction of the IHC reforms. It was conducted on [Monday 15 May 2017](#) and covers a range of procedural issues for home care package providers to assist their transition to providing home care package services within the context of the recent reform changes. Members are encouraged to watch the webinar if having not already done so.

A key point from the webinar was the DoH's announcement that it has assigned 22,000 home care packages to consumers from the national queue since its commencement on 27 February 2017. DoH has reported that the national prioritisation process is working and that any delays in providers activating new consumer home care packages should start to resolve themselves as the first batch of consumers who were assigned packages in early March will have come to the end of their allocated 56-day period for home care package activation. The DoH has also advised that it is continuing to release packages, accounting for a capped supply that is proportionate to the number of clients being discharged from existing home care packages.

## LASA'S MY AGED CARE PROVIDER SURVEY

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As members may be aware, LASA has conducted a survey of its national home care package provider members regarding the early stage implementation experience of the My Aged Care (MAC) National Prioritisation Process. LASA received responses from 74 members across the country and is currently analysing the data that has been collected with information to be released back to members shortly. Thank you to those home care package members who contributed to the survey and those who have since tried to contribute to the survey after the survey period closed in early May.

## LASA'S LIAISON WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Members continue to express their concern about a range of issues relating to their interaction with MAC and the Department of Human Services (DHS) aged care claiming and payment systems for delivery of home care packages.

LASA has a dedicated **Member Support Officer Vicki Boyd** who liaises regularly with the DoH and the DHS in escalating issues for resolution, with feedback to involved members. Where ongoing difficulties are apparent after initially trying to seek resolution directly with MAC and DHS, please forward information to [homecare@lasa.asn.au](mailto:homecare@lasa.asn.au) for follow-up.

Issues that LASA is currently supporting Members with include:

## Aged Care Payments

- Aged care providers not being paid for some home care recipients since 27 February 2017.
- Aged care providers being paid at the incorrect (lower) level for some home care recipients since 27 February 2017.

*LASA's advice to home care package members is to remain vigilant and monitor all monthly payment statements received from the DHS since 27 February with feedback on identified issues going back to the DHS for resolution.*

## Package Transfer Notifications

- Incorrect notifications from MAC to providers advising that one of their package client wants to transfer their package to another provider.

*LASA's advice to home care package members is to be proactive in communicating with package clients, educating them about the portability of their home care packages and encouraging their engagement as issues emerge during the early stages of this policy change.*

- Providers not being notified that a client has been assigned a higher package level. Often first discovered when the provider does their Medicare reconciliation – this poses several problems; including their being no new Agreement having been negotiated with the client prior to this change.

*LASA's advice to home care package members is to concisely document in a client's file, all communication with MAC and their clients concerning the regrading of the client's package. This MAC system error creates issues of non-compliance with Aged Care legislation that requires a Home Care Package Agreement be signed before a change in aged care subsidies can be claimed. Good documentation will assist providers to account for their responsibilities while DoH/DHS continue to work on improving system stability and process.*

## Official Client Correspondence

- Clients receiving official MAC/DHS correspondence advising that their package has been ceased (although clients state they have not received any previous letters about this) which has caused marked distress for these clients. In such a situation, MAC had to advise their technical team to reactivate the package as it had been discontinued.
- Clients on interim home care packages being assigned a higher package level and staying with same provider – are receiving letters that their package has been withdrawn or having a time frame to notify the provider.
- Clients who have commenced a home care package are still receiving letters to say they have been assigned a package although they have already accepted a package.

*LASA's advice to home care package members is to remain vigilant as gatekeepers for clients in their receipt of official correspondence from MAC and DHS, working collaboratively with the intent to protect clients, as far as is practical, from the adverse impact of MAC system errors during this period of implementation.*