

Specialized Wheelchair Acquisition Process

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Start Date: May 2008

Finish Date: September 2008

In the spring of 2007, the WRHA PMO carried out a process review to quantify the time elements of the wheelchair funding and procurement process for providing specialized seating systems to complex clients, and to quantify the potential impacts of the options to provide confidence that the subsequent implementation will decrease timelines.

Three underlying system factors are identified that contribute to the poor quality of process: significant shifts in the business and market conditions for the manufacture, supply, and distribution of wheelchairs (mobility bases), the separation of funding into mobility base and seating components, and the fragmentation of competencies across public and private domains and across process silos.

The review recommends that a segmented process be implemented. This model would segment complex clients from non-complex client into a separate "fast-track" independent of and distinct from the MWP and organize competencies around a streamlined process using a single system supplier. The segmented process would apply to clients requiring the purchase of a new specialty manual and power w/c that requires specialized components.

The project will address the following processes to facilitate the implementation of the segmented process:

- Introduce a certified prescriber model: Limiting assessments to a certified seating specialist would reduce variation in the quality of prescriptions, reduce rework of prescriptions, and improve the quality of seating system
- Introduce a certified vendor model: Creating standards for vendors will provide similar benefits and improve process quality and will ensure that the business has the capacity to provide prescribed equipment in an acceptable time frame and provide trial equipment. This will also include the introduction of a compensation process for vendors for services.
- Improved access to seating clinic resources: There is a general lack of capacity in the system to perform assessments and a lack of appropriate seating clinic resources for rural Manitoba. Access to seating specialists, equipment specialists, and multi-disciplinary teams in sufficient venues is essential for quality assessment and processes.