

THE WA HACC PROGRAM

POLICY AND FRAMEWORK ON THE PROVISION OF BASIC
FOOT AND NAIL CARE.



home and community care

A JOINT COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY PROGRAM
PROVIDING FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE FOR AUSTRALIANS IN NEED

Aged and Continuing Care Policy Directorate - October 2010



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FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about the Policy Framework and Guidelines on the Provision of Basic Foot and Nail Care contact the Aged Care Policy Directorate at the Department of Health:

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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN (WA) HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE (HACC) PROGRAM

POLICY FRAMEWORK AND GUIDELINES

Background

Historically, all foot and nail care services have been provided as Podiatry under the HACC service type of Allied Health Care.


Podiatry and Allied Health are generally considered to be professional health services. As such, they have not been viewed as core business for the HACC program, which focuses on the provision of 'basic maintenance and support services' to its target population. Whilst some podiatry services have been supported, the provision of transport to and from health specialist appointments for eligible clients has been viewed as a stronger role for the HACC Program.

Currently less than 5% of clients receive HACC funded Podiatry. However, given the nature of the HACC target population, it is acknowledged that a larger proportion of clients may require some degree of assistance with their basic foot and nail care. Many are likely to receive this assistance from family members or other informal carers. Others may access Podiatrists in the community either through hospital outpatient services, at Senior Citizens Centres, at Day Therapy Centres, through Division of General Practice programs or in private Podiatry practices. However, the increasing demand placed upon the HACC program indicates that not all clients are able to access the foot and nail care services that they require.

It has been identified that a large proportion of the requirement for these services in the HACC client population is for basic nail clipping and foot care. Rather than for significant foot or nail conditions, many clients may require assistance because they are unable to perform these tasks themselves due to physical mobility and/ or visual problems. Elderly HACC clients are particularly likely to require assistance as mobility, manual dexterity and visual acuity decline with age.

The WA HACC Program has responded to these issues by supporting further research and consultation to inform a review of policy in this area. As a result of this review, the WA HACC Program has developed an alternative model for the provision of basic foot and nail care through Personal Care.

This model has been piloted by CommunityWest throughout 2010. Feedback of the training has been positive and the training is now available "on site" upon request by Service Providers.



The Basic Foot and Nail Care Policy Framework and Guidelines applies to all Service Providers funded under the HACC Program that employ support workers who are involved in the provision of personal care and should be applied in conjunction with the Community Care Common Standards.

This service will target HACC clients who have no specific foot or nail conditions but are unable to perform this task themselves and do not have a carer that is able to.

HACC BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES

Service Providers with support staff involved in the support and provision of basic foot and nail care as part of personal care must adopt the following beliefs and principles that have been endorsed by the WA HACC Program.

Beliefs:

- Frail aged people, people with disabilities and their carers have a right to remain living in the community for as long as possible;
- Clients should be encouraged to maintain their independence as long as possible.

In addition:

- Healthy feet and toenails are an important contributor to safe mobility and therefore, to client independence at home and within the community. For most people, maintaining healthy feet through regular nail clipping and basic foot care is a self-care task.
- Support workers should be able to provide basic foot and nail care as part of personal care;
- Support workers should have access to training to ensure that they have appropriate skills and knowledge to provide basic foot and nail care as part of personal care.
- Specialised care is required when localised foot and nail pathologies exist or, alternatively, there are systemic conditions affecting the feet or placing the person at higher risk.

Principles:

- Each Service Provider must establish a written policy and procedures that outline the role of support workers in the provision of basic foot and nail care. This should include identifying factors whereby a client requires more than basic foot and nail care, ie client has diabetes or a nail condition.
- Clients with more complex foot and nail care needs have access or are referred to an appropriate health professional to provide support, as and when needed;
- Clients receive individual personal care assessment to ascertain their individual foot and nail care requirements and where appropriate this




- assessment be in conjunction with the client, family, doctor and other health professionals;
- Clients have a clear, individual support plan based on their assessed need;
 - Support Workers have access to training that provides them with the necessary skills and knowledge to safely and confidently provide basic foot and nail care and be able to identify when specialised care is required. This should include pre requisite training eg Basic First Aid and manual handling and correct infection control procedures.
 - There is an organisational commitment to ongoing assessment and monitoring of staff practices in relation to the provision of basic foot and nail care;
 - Service Providers are committed to an initial and ongoing self-audit process to guide continuous improvement in the provision of basic foot and nail care (continuous improvement).
 - There are Identified referral pathways for higher risk clients to Podiatry services.
 - Service Providers will ensure they have possession of appropriate foot and nail care equipment.
 - Service Providers will ensure they have access to appropriate sterilisation equipment.

Written Basic Foot and Nail Care Policy and Guidelines

All HACC funded Service Providers are required to have a written basic Foot and Nail Care Policy as part of their Personal Care Policy, which is available and explained to all staff, clients and other relevant people.

The following is a checklist of the things that should be included as part of the Basic Foot and Nail care Policy:

- A statement outlining the involvement your Support Workers will have in assisting clients with the support and provision of basic foot and nail care.
- A statement outlining that the provision of this service is based on the client having basic foot and nail care requirements and no specific health or foot and nail conditions such as diabetes.
- A process for identifying foot and nail conditions and referring the client to the appropriate health professional.
- A process for determining a need to intervene and assist clients in the provision of basic foot and nail care that includes an assessment of client needs as part of their support plan.
- A process for ensuring that staff have necessary competency and skills to provide basic foot and nail care for clients.
- Documentation that identifies any equipment the Support Worker requires to provide basic foot and nail care ie gloves and baby wipes etc.
- Documentation that identifies when equipment has been cleaned/sterilised.

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- Documentation that supports the provision of basic foot and nail care such as the support plan.
 - Documentation that describes the correct procedures to provide basic foot and nail care.
 - A process to report on changes of foot conditions/health including any triggers for change.
 - Process to follow if the Support Worker has any concerns
 - Process and documentation required for dealing with incidents, this to include documentation for management/support worker and client.
 - Reference to infection control procedures
 - Reference to relevant OSH procedures to all aspects of client support
 - Service provider has a process in place to maintain appropriate communication with client/carer and family.

Staff Training

The Basic Foot and Nail Care Policy Framework and Guidelines is supported by a competency based training program and will assist HACC funded Service Providers to improve current practice. Competencies include:

- A written assessment and a practical assessment at the end of the training day.
- A second practical assessment within 6 weeks of the training in your workplace to complete competency.
- Ongoing workplace competency assessment will be required on an annual basis. This will involve a workplace observational assessment by a HACC Coordinator who has attended the foot and nail care training.

The training is available through CommunityWest Inc.

REFERENCES

- HACC Act 1985
- HACC National Program Guidelines 2007
- Home and Community Care Business Case for Podiatry Project 2004
- HACC Triennial Plan 2008-2011.



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