



**Office of the  
Health Complaints  
Commissioner  
2007**

**700-0505022 –Orthotic and Prosthetic Services Tasmania – Prosthetic Limb Replacement – Standard of service**

***Section 23(1)(c), (d) &(g)(ii) Health Complaints Act 1995 – that a health service provider acted unreasonably in the provision of a health service - a health service provider failed to exercise due skill - a health service user was not provided...with sufficient information on the treatment and health services available to enable the user to make an informed decision.***

**Finalised June 2007**

The complainant sought services from Orthotic and Prosthetic Services Tasmania (OPST) due to pain and discomfort he was experiencing with his right below knee prosthesis with the view of having a new prosthesis made. The complainant believed that OPST did not provide an adequate service. His expectations were based on the service he had received in Adelaide, South Australia where he resided prior to relocating to Tasmania in July 2000 on his retirement.

The issues under investigation were whether OPST provided the complainant with an appropriate standard of service and sufficient information about the treatment and service provided by OPST to make informed decisions

The complainant had a right below-knee amputation following a motor vehicle accident in 1965 and had worn a strap suspension prosthetic leg since that time. When he sought the service of OPST he specifically requested a foot type he had worn for the past 12 years, which he had purchased in Adelaide. OPST did not agree with this request based on clinical grounds including the need for the complainant to obtain treatment of a neuroma on his stump.

Primary Health convened a Clinical Review Committee (CRC) to investigate the complaint lodge with this Office to identify and correct system weaknesses and to minimise the risk of recurrence. The CRC conducted a thorough evaluation of the complaint and the services provided by OPST. Recommendations were aimed at addressing the issues raised and at improving service delivery. The Commissioner endorsed the CRC recommendations.

During the investigation an agreement was reached with the complainant on the progress of clinical intervention and service provision that was documented in an individual service agreement. A management decision was made to fully subsidise the requested prosthesis, which was to the complainant's advantage and exceeds normal service provision in Tasmania and interstate.

The conclusion was that the complainant experienced difficulties in accessing service with OPST due to his complex needs, the lack of recognition of these needs and as a consequence the failure to provide a coordinated multidisciplinary approach. The complainant's expectations did not align with the service provided or available through OPST due to a number of factors including his expectation that OPST provide a non-standard prosthesis at not cost, inadequate case management and difficulties with communication. OPST took appropriate action in conducting a clinical review of the complaint and OPST governance processes resulting in recommendations to be implemented with a progress report to be provided to the Commissioner.

- Approved for website
- Approved for Annual Report [theme or case summary]

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Health Complaints Commissioner