



January 2019

# CHG NEWS

An educational newsletter about Occupational Health and the Return to Work system in South Australia.

*This month ...* we look at Noise Induced Hearing Loss Injury Claims, and how Employers can reduce their annual Premiums, as well as Occupational Physicians and their role in the Return To Work (RTW) system. We hope you enjoy CHG news.

## Noise Induced Hearing Loss

Put simply, 'hearing' is the process by which the ear converts sound waves into vibration. The louder or longer the noise, the greater or more prolonged the vibration. Loud noises for short periods of time, and moderate noises or frequencies for prolonged periods of time, can both cause temporary or permanent damage to the ear. In the RTW system, Noise Induced Hearing Loss occurs when permanent damage to the ear has been sustained by a worker due to exposure to harmful levels or amounts of noise in the workplace. About 400 hearing related claims are managed by the RTW scheme each year. In the 2018FY, the average cost of a Noise induced hearing loss claim was \$24,236, which was \$5,663 more expensive than the average workplace injury claim, adding to the cost of Employer's premiums.

are unsure whether your workplace has harmful noise, or want more information on hearing screening, speak to CHG.

Employers have a legal obligation to minimise their employee's exposure to harmful noise. Assessing whether your workplace noise levels are harmful is generally the first step towards meeting this obligation. Eliminating all harmful noise in the workplace is ideal, but often not possible, and as such PPE should be used to reduce a worker's exposure to noise. A formal assessment of noise levels will allow for matching the appropriate type of hearing PPE to the type of harmful noise in the workplace. Other control measures include hearing screening tests on employees, which can be performed onsite or in an Occupational Health clinic. Hearing screening tests can also be performed prior to employment, to help ascertain whether any impairment was present prior to a candidate's employment. If you

## Data Highlights

CHG Client Data indicates that Employers who partner with CHG benefit from an average saving of \$5,620 in claim costs for each Noise Induced Hearing Loss claim.

Celebrating...

- Staff highlights for January include:
  - 15 Years of Service**  
Dr Thang Vuong (*Director of Medical Services*)
  - 5 Years of Service**  
Kellie Martin (*Customer Service Officer*)

## Upcoming National Health Awareness Days

**27 February 2019**  
Teal Ribbon Day (Ovarian Cancer)

**03 March 2019**  
World Hearing Day

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## What Is An Occupational Physician?

An Occupational Physician is a Doctor who has chosen to complete a specialisation in workplace medicine. To become an Occupational Physician, a Doctor must undertake further education with the Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, whilst also working considerable hours directly with Employers and their injured workers. It is because of this extended education and experience, that an Occupational Physician is an expert in workplace injury assessment and management.

Within the RTW system, an Occupational Physician may be involved in:

- Managing an Injured Worker, working collaboratively with the Treating Doctor;
- Providing a Second Opinion Medicine service to assist an individual's Treating Doctor in their clinical management of an injured worker;
- Providing an Independent Medical Examination (IME);
- Performing a Permanent Impairment Assessment (PIA) when an injured worker's function has stabilised post workplace injury.
- Developing a Health Monitoring protocol with an Employer whose workers may be exposed to hazardous substances including Silica, Isocyanates, and Pesticides.

Read on to meet CHG's Specialist Physicians, and see how CHG Occupational Physician Dr Tony Thoo developed a successful Health Monitoring protocol reducing the claim costs for an Employer.

**To register for the email edition of CHG News, and be eligible to be invited to CHG's AEC Corporate Box, please visit:**  
<https://chg.net.au/about/news>

## Meet CHG's Specialist Physicians

Workplace injuries can often be complex, with persistent pain, and unpredictable RTW outcomes. This is where CHG's Specialist Physician Team can help. CHG's Specialist Physicians work independently or collaboratively with treating Doctors, providing expert assessment and management of an injured worker. CHG's Occupational Physician services are available at CHG Elizabeth Vale, CHG Gillman, and the CHG Specialist Centre in Mile End where CHG's Pain Management and Rehabilitation Physicians are also based. If you think you might require the services of a CHG Specialist Physician, discuss it with the treating CHG Doctor, or contact CHG.



Dr Roberto D'Onise  
*Occupational Physician*



Dr Porhan Kang  
*Pain Management Physician and Rehabilitation Physician*



Dr Dilip Kapur  
*Pain Management Physician*



Dr Dion Suyapto  
*Occupational Physician*

## A CHG Case Study



Dr Tony Thoo  
*Occupational Physician*

Dr Tony Thoo is a CHG Occupational Physician and a fellow of both the Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and the American Academy of Disability Evaluating Physicians. He has nearly 30 years' experience in medical practice, including 30 years of specialising in Occupational Medicine. Dr Thoo is contracted by multiple private and public sector organisations to provide services and advice on-site at the client's workplace, and has consulted in a wide variety of industries including manufacturing, automotive, defence, resources and government administration. Dr Thoo specialises in complex medical assessments, Permanent Impairment Assessments, Fit for Duty Assessments, strategic claims management advice, and health monitoring programs.

Dr Thoo's experience in health monitoring was instrumental in achieving significant cost savings for a large government employer. By proactively attending the worksite, analysing the job demands and occupational exposures, Dr Thoo was able to design a well-tailored Health Monitoring protocol which included injury management, medical assessment, and screening tests for occupational exposures to Hazardous Chemicals, Vibration, Noise and Laser Frequencies. With this protocol in place, injured workers who saw CHG had a 35% reduction in their injury claims costs compared to other providers.

### CHG Client Rewards

CHG values the loyalty of our Clients. By registering for the email edition of CHG News, Clients are eligible to be invited to CHG's Adelaide Entertainment Centre (AEC) Corporate Box. Attendees last month were:

Harvey Norman	Dominant	TAPS	Finlay Plumbing
Hoshizaki Lancer	St Basil's	Personal HR	
Sekisui Rib Loc	Boart Longyear	RAND Refrigerated Logistics	

*Next month ...* we look at Strokes at work and how they can be prevented, as well as outline when you might seek a second opinion or IME for an injured worker. We hope you enjoyed CHG News. Let's keep your workplace healthy, happy and productive.