



## NEW ZEALAND



## New Zealand to host 7th IFDM in 2014



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DR JAN WHITE,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE  
ACCIDENT COMPENSATION  
CORPORATION (ACC)

The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), a member of the International Disability Management Standards Council (IDMSC), has announced it will host the 7th International Forum on Disability Management (IFDM) in 2014. According to ACC, “This Forum aims to facilitate international discussion and debate around disability management and its role in reducing employer cost, improving productivity and economic growth, promoting return to work, and eliminating disability barriers.”

While ACC has accepted the mantle as hosts, they will be working with leading New Zealand government agencies, other insurers, business, employee representatives, and health and rehabilitation providers to develop a program for the Forum that will draw from best practice and stimulate debate on change in the way workplace disabilities are managed.

Dr Jan White, Chief Executive of ACC says, “New Zealand recognises the need to enhance its approach to workplace well-being. The changes in demographics, especially the aging population, mean New Zealand, like many other countries, faces an increasing burden of disability over the next 20 years. As a nation, we are building collaborative partnerships to enable more effective disability management and thus address the wider issues of workplace productivity and inclusiveness.”

A nation-wide, consensus-based approach is critical for New Zealand as it will raise awareness of the importance of disability management and positively influence workplace behaviours to support this change. Hosting the IFDM will raise the profile of these issues at a national level, thus inciting action and focus. By 2014, New Zealand will be in a position to share its key achievements in this area.

ACC executives recently attended the 4th IFDM in Germany and witnessed the high standard of organization, planning, and collaboration needed to bring a high-profile event of this nature to life. A 2014 Committee will be established shortly, comprising key stakeholders within workplace disability management, to begin the preparation for this event.



This committee will be responsible for the choice of theme for the 2014 IFDM. While it is still early days, it would appear likely that this Forum will aim to showcase how nations are building workplaces and societies that can optimize their total potential workforce. In this regard, New Zealand is an ideal location given that the future challenges for workplaces and the health sector will already be playing out. Furthermore, other nations will learn how this best practice framework has been implemented in the context of New Zealand's unique model of social insurance for personal injury.

Dr. White notes, "ACC is excited to be hosting the 7th IFDM in 2014 and looks forward to working with key New Zealand partner organisations to deliver a successful and insightful Forum."

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## **2008 IFDM IN BERLIN ATTRACTS 700 DELEGATES FROM 35 COUNTRIES**

Organizers of the 2008 IFDM held September 22-24 in Berlin report that about 700 participants from 35 countries – including government institutions, employers and employees, service providers, insurance companies, social workers and physicians – demonstrated that reintegration of people with health impairments is a contemporary and important topic and pointed out the benefits of disability management worldwide.

Co-chair of the IDMSC and 2008 IFDM organizer Joachim Breuer, PhD, CEO of the German workers compensation system and Chair of the ISSA Technical Commission on

Workers Compensation, listed several benefits of this year's Forum. "Many participants indicated that the conference took the idea of disability management (DM) to the international level, giving the feeling that it is now a worldwide movement. The number of participants was higher than expected with about 50 percent of the participants coming from a foreign country. German politicians saw DM as one of the key factors for improving living conditions for disabled persons; they also agreed in DM being one of the ways to keep Germany's leadership in that area."

Breuer continued to say that several countries that haven't yet decided about a disability management policy or about using the DM standards of the IDMSC are now much closer to a positive decision, adding that a significant highlight of the forum was the signing of the license agreement between NIDMAR and Hong Kong.

After hosting the successful Forum for 2008, Breuer is pleased to turn organizing duties over to the United States in 2010, to Unum in London, England in 2012 and now to New Zealand in 2014.

"New Zealand has always been a modern and progressive country, especially in the field of social security. The ACC is the right and competent organization to organize it, because ACC has done such tremendous work in implementing the idea of disability management in its own country."

*Photo: Mt. Cook, New Zealand*

*Photo: Berlin Gates, Germany*