



HEALTH: LEAPING FORWARD WITH DANCER MEDICAL CARE

BY HELEN LAWS, MANAGER, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DANCE MEDICINE AND SCIENCE

Just over a year after the launch of the National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science (NIDMS), we have seen nearly 200 dancers come through the NHS clinic at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in central London. This clinic has been enthusiastically welcomed by dancers, many of whom had been struggling to get to the bottom of longer-term injuries. Dancers have found huge relief in finally getting a diagnosis and some meaningful advice from dance medicine specialists in how to proceed with their rehabilitation as effectively as possible.

The NIDMS partner organisations always have in mind that what dancers need when they are injured is fast, specialist treatment. Due to high levels of demand, the NHS clinic now has a waiting list that is far longer than we would like. However don't let this put you off seeking a referral; we are working hard behind the scenes to expand the number of NHS clinics on offer and working with potential new partners to be able to offer these outside of London too – hopefully before the end of the year.

Dancers who are covered by medical insurance or a cash health plan can

use these to access private specialist healthcare practitioners quickly at NIDMS partner organisations Trinity Laban and Birmingham Royal Ballet's Jerwood Centre for the Prevention and Treatment of Dance Injuries. Dancers can also find healthcare practitioners with dance experience listed on the Healthcare Practitioners Directory on Dance UK's website. Another option is to book an initial assessment at a BAPAM (British Association for Performing Arts Medicine) clinic while waiting for an NHS appointment, or for help in deciding which type of practitioner to see for a particular problem. Dancers who would like help or advice on accessing dance specialist healthcare can always call the Dance UK office to speak to the NIDMS or Healthier Dancer Programme (HDP) managers, as they have a good understanding of the options available at any particular time.

With NIDMS's goals being to offer comprehensive and affordable clinical and dance science services for all professional and pre-professional dancers, there are a few ongoing strands of inquiry being pursued related to the sustainable funding of such services. We are looking into alternatives to standard medical

insurance products with a group who specialise in providing health cover for elite sports people. This work is highlighting again that while medical insurance is extremely useful to have, it will never be enough on its own.

Dancers ideally need additional support to maintain optimal physical condition and prevent injury, whether from physical therapists or strength and conditioning practitioners. With this in mind, we are also investigating potential interest in a new Dance UK/NIDMS health and fitness membership package that would include twice yearly fitness and physiotherapy assessments available through NIDMS partners, enabling dancers to receive tailored advice for their specific training needs. Keep your eyes open for a survey that will be doing the rounds as we want to hear from you!

To keep up with the latest developments from the National Institute and Dance UK's Healthier Dancer Programme, including our research and education work, make sure you 'like' our Facebook pages and do check our website, www.nidms.co.uk, prior to accessing any NIDMS services.

The NIDMS partners are: DUK, BRB's Jerwood Centre, RNOH, Trinity Laban, Uni of Wolves, Uni of Brum.

