



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

- FACT SHEET -

Strengthening the Provision of Quality Diagnostic Radiology Services

As part of the 2012-13 Budget the Government announced the ‘Strengthening the Provision of Quality Diagnostic Radiology Services’ measure, which will strengthen the provision of quality Medicare funded diagnostic radiology services by requiring those performing the actual diagnostic imaging procedure to hold minimum qualifications for all x-ray, angiography and fluoroscopy services.

The measure responds to a recent review of diagnostic imaging that found the absence of minimum qualifications for people actually performing the imaging service was a matter of concern.

The Australian Government is focused on the provision of quality and safe diagnostic imaging services. This measure builds on a number of measures, initiatives and projects already undertaken by the Department. These include the Diagnostic Imaging Accreditation Scheme (DIAS), the Diagnostic Imaging Quality Practice Program (DIQPP), and the introduction of MRI initiatives to increase access to MRI services for children to reduce the risk of unnecessary ionizing radiation from CT.

The Department will continue to engage stakeholders through the implementation of the Diagnostic Imaging Reform Package.

From 1 November 2012, only medical practitioners, certain dental practitioners (for specified services), and registered medical radiation practitioners will be able to perform diagnostic imaging procedures for all diagnostic radiology services listed in the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS), excluding mammography. Medical radiation practitioners must be registered with the Medical Radiation Practitioner Board. Consistent with the previous requirements, dental practitioners and medical radiation practitioners must be employed by, or under supervision of, a medical practitioner.

This measure will improve the quality and safety of Medicare-funded diagnostic radiology procedures. This initiative does not affect the ability of selected health professionals to request Medicare-eligible x-ray services for their patients.

An allied health professional will be able to perform an x-ray if they are employed by, or under the supervision of, a medical practitioner and have been registered as a medical radiation practitioner by the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia.

This measure provides for exemptions for rural and remote areas. Exemptions apply for areas that fall into the outer regional, remote and very remote (RA3, RA4 or RA5) categories under the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) system. They also apply for areas that fall within the inner regional (RA2) category that are also classified as RRMA 4 and RRMA 5.

Providers will need to check their locality on the Doctor Connect website at doctorconnect.gov.au

Health Insurance (Diagnostic Imaging Services Table) 2012 Regulations

Subject to the passage of legislation, from 1 November the measure introduces the requirement that x-rays, angiography and fluoroscopy services are performed by appropriately qualified practitioners;

Amendment 1: Amendment to *Division 2.3 Group I3 – Diagnostic radiology*

- Clause 2.3.1 (1) allows only the following health practitioners to perform diagnostic imaging service:
 - a medical practitioner; or
 - a medical radiation practitioner who:
 - i. is employed by a medical practitioner; or
 - ii. provides the service under the supervision of a medical practitioner
- Clause 2.3.2 (2) allows only the following health practitioners to perform diagnostic imaging service:
 - a dental practitioner;
 - i. may provide the service because of the operation of subsection 16B (2) of the Act; and
 - ii. is employed by a medical practitioner; or
 - iii. provides the service under the supervision of a medical practitioner

Amendment 2: Amendment to *Division 2.3 Group I3 – Diagnostic radiology*

- Clause 3 provides details on the rural and remote exemptions for this measure. These exemptions apply in outer regional areas to very remote (as classified under the ASGC system), and in inner regional areas where the location is also categorised as RRMA4 or RRMA 5.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will patients be able to receive Medicare eligible x-rays provided by an allied health professional?

An allied health professional will be able to perform an x-ray if they are employed by, or under the supervision of, a medical practitioner and have been registered as a medical radiation practitioner by the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia.

This initiative does not affect the ability of selected health professionals to request Medicare-eligible x-ray services for their patients.

I am an allied health professional who was granted licences under state and territory legislation to own and operate x-ray equipment. Does this impact on my licence?

This measure does not impact on licences issued under state and territory legislation to own and operate x-ray equipment in private practice; it is aimed at enhancing the safety and quality of diagnostic radiology procedures performed under Medicare.

Why are mammography services excluded?

As the existing professional supervision requirements for mammography include the requirement for personal attendance by a radiologist if required, mammography has not been included in this measure.