



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH
MINISTER FOR SPORT**



Ref No: MC14-008941

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Jensen

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 June 2014 regarding a petition on private health insurers and radiotherapy for cancer patients. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Under Medicare arrangements, benefits are available either through private health insurance or the Medicare safety nets. For in-hospital services, the Medicare benefit is paid at 75 per cent of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) fee and health insurance benefits are also available. However, for out-of-hospital services, patients may be eligible to increased benefits through the extended Medicare safety net and the original Medicare safety nets.

Private health insurers are not prohibited from paying benefits for radiotherapy services if the service is provided to an in-hospital patient. However, if the patient is classified by the treating provider as an out-of-hospital patient then benefits are available through the Medicare safety nets, but not from private insurers. This arrangement was designed to provide support to patients where private health insurance is not available.

In 2013, benefits of \$35.8 million were paid through the Medicare safety nets for radiotherapy services.

Yours sincerely

8/8/14

PETER DUTTON