

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000941

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: CT Teleradiology

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

- a) How many radiology centres in rural and regional areas currently provide CT scans without a radiologist present?
- b) Has there been any evidence of excess adverse events at these centres in comparison to centres where a radiologist is present?
- c) Can the department clarify the reasons for the cancellation of the supervision exemption for rural and remote CT scan centres?
- d) Has the Department been contacted by centres concerned about the impact of this change, in particular any concerned that they may be forced to close down as a result of this change?
- e) If so, how many complaints have been received and what is the nature of these complaints?

Answer:

- a) The Department of Health does not collect data on how many radiology centres in rural and regional areas provide CT scans without a radiologist present.

The current regulations for supervision of CT services exist within the *Health Insurance (Diagnostic Imaging Services Table (DIST) Regulation 2014* (Division 2.2, section 2.2.1) and state that a CT must be performed under the supervision of a specialist in the specialty of diagnostic radiology (with the exception of items 57360 and 57361), who must be available to monitor and influence the service, and if necessary to attend on the patient personally. An exemption to this exists for services performed within an emergency, or because of medical necessity in a remote location.

- b) The Department does not collect information about adverse events in diagnostic imaging practices. Data on adverse radiation events is collected by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA).
- c) There has not been a cancellation of the supervision exemption for rural and remote CT practices.
- d) Please refer to part c) above.
- e) Please refer to part c) above.