**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE WEDNESDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2014**

**Medicare measures “good news for patients”**

The Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association (ADIA) has welcomed the announcement by the Federal Government not to proceed with the co-payment measures for diagnostic imaging services.

Medicare rebates for essential diagnostic imaging services such as X-rays, MRIs and Ultrasounds will not be cut under the revised Government policy. This will safeguard vulnerable patients that are referred by their GP or specialist for diagnostic imaging.

Under the Federal Government’s new package of measures for diagnostic imaging, there will be:

* No $7 co-payment for diagnostic imaging services;
* No changes to the bulk-billing incentive for diagnostic imaging; and
* No cuts to existing Medicare rebates for diagnostic imaging.

ADIA Vice President Dr Sue Ulreich welcomed the announcement as “good news for Australian patients”.

“While we acknowledge the fiscal challenge of an ageing population, it is important that we get the balance right and, from a diagnostic imaging perspective, the new package is much better,” Dr Ulreich said.

“The original model proposed changes that were too much and went too far. It would have created a situation where many people would simply have decided they couldn’t afford to be diagnosed, which would have had significant long-term implications for patients and our health system,” she said.

“Now we are very pleased the Government has listened to our concerns and worked collaboratively to arrive at an outcome that safeguards patients by helping Australians access affordable diagnostic imaging services.”

Dr Ulreich also acknowledged the Federal Government for looking after vulnerable Australians and for focusing on quality medical care.

“ADIA is committed to supporting a model of Medicare that enables and encourages quality care, and this initiative is a positive step in the right direction,” she said.

However, Dr Ulreich said the freeze on Medicare rebates for diagnostic that has been in place since 1998 is foreshadowed to continue, which will continue to put pressure on practices to charge fees that are higher than the Medicare rebate. Patients are already contributing to the cost of many diagnostic imaging services – with average gaps now $88 per service.

“This is something we would like to continue to work on with the Government to ensure patients are protected in the long term.”

**MEDIA**

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