

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 1200(AEST) SUNDAY 17th MARCH 2019

Radiologists commend Minister Hunt for Medicare overhaul

Australian radiologists have commended Health Minister Greg Hunt for listening to the concerns of patients following his announcement that the Federal Government is ending the freeze on Medicare rebates for most x-rays and scans.

From 1 July 2020, rebates for x-ray, ultrasound, mammography, fluoroscopy, interventional radiology and CT scans will be indexed, ending a freeze that dates back to 1998.

Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association (ADIA) President **Dr Siavash Es'haghi** said Minister Hunt's announcement was "great news for patients".

"Greg Hunt deserves recognition and plaudits as the Health Minister who has brought about the most meaningful structural reform of Medicare rebates for radiology patients in more than two decades," he said.

"It is a real step forward in terms of access and affordability for patients and is a crucial decision for the ongoing sustainability of Medicare.

"After more than 20 years of lobbying successive governments and ministers, we are delighted that Mr Hunt has listened to the concerns of the sector, has understood the issues facing patients and has acted for the good of Medicare."

Minister Hunt's announcement means more than nine in ten radiology services provided under Medicare will be indexed from 1 July 2020, with flow-on effects for the hip pockets of the nine million Australians who access these services every year.

"There is still some work to do in terms of ending the freeze for all radiology services," Dr Es'haghi said.

"We look forward to the day when all x-rays and scans are indexed."

Today's announcement by the Federal Government will benefit patients who require services such as:

- Families needing pregnancy ultrasound
- Women needing ultrasound for diagnosis of breast cancer
- Women needing pelvic ultrasound for diagnosis of ovarian cancer
- Australians needing carotid ultrasound to assess the risk of stroke
- Australians needing stress echo to diagnosis heart disease
- Australians needing chest x-rays to diagnose pneumonia and other respiratory conditions

- Australians needing x-ray to diagnose broken bones
- Australians needing x-ray to diagnose the cause of shoulder pain, instability or stiffness
- Australians needing digital subtraction angiography to diagnose brain aneurysm

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