

21 FEB 2018



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

Ref No: MC18-001606

c/o Kate Scott-Murphy  
Level 9, 51 Druiitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Prof Slavotinek, Drs Es'haghi and Dhupelia, Ms Wells and Mr Yates,

Thank you for your correspondence of 19 January 2018 to the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP regarding the Taskforce recommendation to restrict GP-requesting of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the knee to patients aged less than 50 years. The Minister has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) Taskforce (the Taskforce) is an expert, clinician-led non-statutory committee tasked with reviewing MBS items taking into account factors including concerns about safety, clinically unnecessary service provision and accepted clinical guidelines.

As you are aware, the Taskforce has recommended that MRI of the knee (Medicare item numbers 63560 and 63561) constitutes low-value care in the investigation of acute knee injury among patients older than 50 years. This is due to the comparatively high prevalence of chronic, degenerative knee changes seen among older patients. In making this recommendation, the Taskforce acknowledged that patients with relevant symptoms will still be able to access knee MRI by referral to a specialist, such as an orthopaedic surgeon, if under consideration for surgery. The Taskforce also considered the feedback obtained during the public consultation process when finalising their recommendations.

Among the objectives of the Review is consideration of disinvestment in high-volume, low-value services. As a positive consequence, the MBS is then able to include new and emerging services coming through the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC), including a number of new MRI services to improve patient care.

Recommendations from the Taskforce are currently under consideration by the Government.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the MBS Review.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Simpson'.

Andrew Simpson  
Assistant Secretary  
Medical Benefits Division

16 February 2018