

RCPA WELCOMES GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN ON PATHOLOGY INDUCEMENTS

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA), Australia's peak body for medical testing, welcomes the announcement of the establishment of a Medicare Australia Taskforce to investigate reports of alleged incentives being provided to GPs and other requesting doctors by pathology providers.

It is the College's view that the requesting of pathology tests should be based solely on clinical need and it in no way supports inducements between requesting doctors and pathology providers.

Moreover, when the Health Insurance Amendment (Inappropriate and Prohibited Practices & Other Measures) Act 2007 was about to be introduced, the College called for an audit process to be put in place by Medicare Australia to ensure the process of requesting tests was transparent. However, Medicare advised that it did not have the power to do this at that time.

While the College welcomes the Minister for Human Services, Chris Bowen's announcement of an investigation into allegations of inducements being sought by providers, the College urges the government to make it a priority to also investigate any allegations of inducements being sought by requesters.

The College says it is important to recognise that testing is increasing in many countries due to ageing populations and the greater number of people living with chronic disease but emphasises that it does not condone unnecessary pathology testing.

As such the College welcomes the Taskforce and believes it will play a vital role in ensuring the integrity of the Medicare program, which is a cornerstone of community health standards.

The College would support that any person(s) or organisations breaking the law would be dealt with appropriately.

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