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Wednesday, 3 October 2018

Dr Jill Padrotta
MBS Review Taskforce
Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee
Australian Government Department of Health

Email: MBSTaskforceCommittees@health.gov.au

Dear Dr Padrotta,

Re: Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Taskforce - Reports from the Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee: Breast Imaging and Nuclear Medicine

Thank you for your correspondence dated 22 August 2018, inviting feedback from the Australasian Sonographers Association (ASA) to the MBS Review Taskforce Reports from the Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee: Breast Imaging and Nuclear Medicine.

The ASA also thanks the Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee for their significant effort reviewing the many MBS items within their remit. This work is of significant importance to Australian's access to quality and appropriate diagnostic imaging services.

Following consideration of the *Report from the Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee – Breast Imaging*, we confirm the ASA supports Recommendation 1: Create an ultrasound-guided breast biopsy item.

The ASA expects this change will improve patients access to ultrasound-guided biopsies, and will also streamline ultrasound appointments for practices, providing improved care pathway for the patient.

Not having a separate ultrasound biopsy item number has been an issue for quite some time in the provision of these services. Creating an ultrasound-guided breast biopsy item should facilitate the provision of breast ultrasound and biopsy on the same day, and reduce the instance of patients being required to receive the services on separate days.

We note that if this recommended change is accepted by government it will be essential that the economic assessment appropriately considers the service context to ensure there is no disincentive to provide these services on the same day. It is also essential that referring practitioners are educated on including on breast ultrasound referrals the comment “an ultrasound-guided breast intervention be performed if clinically indicated” as otherwise the patient may be delayed in having the biopsy service by waiting for the referrer’s approval.

Responding to the consultation questions:

1. The ASA agrees with ultrasound specific recommendations of the Breast Imaging Report from the Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee.
2. The ASA is not aware of any aspects of ultrasound breast imaging that have not been considered as part of this report that requires further investigation.

The ASA has no further comment on other recommendations of Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee Breast or Nuclear Medicine reports.

If you require anything further information in support of this feedback please contact James Brooks-Dowsett, ASA Policy & Advocacy Advisor, by phone on (03) 9552 0008 or email to policy@sonographers.org .

I look forward to continue to support this important work by the Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jennifer Alphonse'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Jennifer Alphonse PhD

President – Australasian Sonographers Association