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Revised professional capabilities for medical radiation practice

AMA submission to the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia

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The AMA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Medical Radiation Practice Board's draft revised professional capabilities document.

Overall, the AMA considers the Board has produced a robust document reflecting important changes to the health care environment in which medical radiation services operate.

However, the AMA is concerned that certain proposed revisions to the medical radiation practice professional capabilities document could be interpreted as expanding the scope of practice of radiographers beyond their training into areas that require medical training and specialist expertise.

The AMA supports a model of medical radiation practice where the medical practitioner – a clinical radiologist – is the leader of the health care team. This means the clinical radiologist provides professional supervision and oversight of all aspects of patient care.

The AMA values radiographers as highly skilled members of the medical imaging team who have undergone extensive education and training. Radiographers' technical expertise enables them to play an essential role in image acquisition with limited supervision and undertake significant responsibility to support the work of the clinical radiologist. The core focus of their role is image acquisition and presentation, assisting patients during imaging and procedures, and maintaining equipment.

Safe, high quality medical radiation practice involves all members of the medical imaging team working in collaboration.

The AMA does not support extension of the role of a radiographer to include tasks that require medical training. Radiographers are not qualified to assess requests or referrals, suggest alternative imaging, or to interpret and communicate findings.

Radiographers do not undergo medical training, or study the nature of disease in-depth, or the capacity of different imaging techniques to demonstrate disease processes.

The responsibility for assessing requests, suggesting alternatives, and communicating results must remain with the radiologist. Extending a radiographer's role into these areas puts the patient at risk.

The AMA has consulted with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR) on this submission as well as with its radiologist members.

The AMA supports the additional and detailed comments RANZCR will make in its submission to the Board on specific aspects of the draft professional capabilities document.

In particular, the AMA considers the document should reflect that a radiographer works under the professional supervision of a clinical radiologist.

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Contact

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