Surgeons welcome increased transparency in private health

Sunday 12 June, 2016

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) welcomes the Australian Government’s plans to simplify private health insurance, and introduce more transparency for customers.

RACS President Philip Truskett says that private health insurance is a critical part of the Australian healthcare sector and it is the right time for reform.

“The private hospital sector is a crucial and dominant part of the health system, with over 60% of elective surgery being performed in private hospitals,” Dr Truskett said.

“Without a viable, productive and safe private hospital sector, Australian health will suffer. Clinicians working in our hospital systems are best-placed to advise on future directions.

“Plans to introduce standard definitions for procedures, which will reduce complexity for customers weighing up different policies, are a good move.

“Clearly categorising insurance packages will also contribute to the long-term sustainability of the healthcare sector, by encouraging healthier customers to remain in the system.

“RACS is very happy to engage. We hope the Government acknowledges the importance of involving input from clinicians to ensure that patient safety is understood and protected.

“Those working in our hospitals are the ones who best understand the effects of changes to private health care and its funding, and our Fellows have been involved already, providing submissions and advice.

“This is too important to get wrong. If the private sector is mismanaged it puts patient safety and the interests of the whole community at peril.

“We look forward to active engagement as consultation, planning and implementation are undertaken.”

The College welcomes the Government’s ambition of ongoing improvement in the healthcare sector and looks forward to the positive involvement of all stakeholders.

About RACS

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

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