



AOA

AUSTRALIAN
ORTHOPAEDIC
ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

Square peg round hole approach to Private Health Reform

Over 100,000 Australian orthopaedic patients every year could be worse off if the proposed traffic-light approach to private health insurance reform isn't reclassified, with more time needed to revisit modelling assumptions, according to the Australian Orthopaedic Association.

AOA is concerned that the proposed reform places too much focus on 'category care' where there is real risk that insurance categories will influence and/or modify the type of care for patients, at the expense of quality care. Similarly, issues around multidisciplinary care where some orthopaedic practices are covered, while other related procedures are not, also need to be addressed.

"Splitting funding for hip, knee and shoulder replacements between product levels will result in the level of private health cover influencing clinical decision making," said AOA President Dr Lawrence Malisano.

"The proposal to group policies into gold, silver and bronze levels of cover from the 1 April 2019 is great in theory, but the devil is in the detail. It's a simple, straightforward approach that unfortunately misses the mark on a few critical areas of health care.

"It will increase pressure on the already over-burdened public health system that will ultimately lead to an increase in chronic pain within the Australian community," he said.

Based on 2017 Australian Orthopaedic National Joint Replacement Registry data, osteoarthritis is the principal diagnosis for all five types of partial knee replacements (at 98.9 per cent) and primary total knee replacement (at 97.6 per cent of cases).

AOA is calling on the Government to revisit its modelling of the traffic-light classification system by putting the Australian consumer first, rather than the profit levels of Australian private health insurance companies.

"We applaud the government and the overall approach to private health reform, which is to provide consumers with greater value, choice and transparency around their private health insurance. However, as it currently stands the reclassification will result in thousands of Australian paying more to access the benefits that they currently enjoy," Dr Malisano said.

Media Enquiries

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About the Australian Orthopaedic Association

The Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA) is the peak professional body for orthopaedic surgeons in Australia. AOA provides high quality specialist education, training and continuing professional development. AOA is committed to ensuring the highest possible standard of orthopaedic care and is the leading authority in the provision of orthopaedic information to the community. AOA actively supports scientific research and orthopaedic humanitarian initiatives in Australia and overseas.