



Neurosurgical Society
of Australasia



ABC Four Corners documentary 'Pain Factory' Tripartite Statement

20 December 2024

Representatives of the Australian Orthopaedic Association, the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia and the Spine Society of Australia took part in a meeting with representatives of the Department of Health and Aged Care (DOHAC) concerning spine surgery MBS item number compliance on 13 November 2024.

At the beginning of this meeting, the DOHAC representatives explained that they had undertaken a review of spine surgery item number compliance following the *4 Corners* program 'Pain Factory', which was shown on 8 April 2024.

The DOHAC representatives indicated that analysis to date had not substantiated the conclusions about the likelihood of incorrect payment of Medicare benefits as drawn in the *Spinal Surgery Medical Claims Integrity Report*.

The meeting then further discussed many aspects of surgical billing. All attendees at the meeting indicated that they believed surgeons must comply with MBS regulations when billing for their procedures.

The professional organisations offered the department appropriate assistance when matters of concern were raised, which the department welcomed.

The collegiate atmosphere of the meeting indicates that concerns will be addressed fairly and rationally.

Kind regards,

Scott Fletcher
AOA President

Kate Drummond
NSA President

John Costi
SSA President