

## Payment to Medical Officers Undertaking a Clinical Appraisal Remotely

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**Functional Sub group** Personnel/Workforce - Industrial and Employee Relations  
Personnel/Workforce - Salaries

**Summary** The purpose of this Policy Directive is to set out the policy requirements and procedures which accompany variations made to the Public Hospital Medical Officers Award ('the Award') concerning medical officers who undertake a clinical appraisal remotely.

**Author Branch** Workplace Relations

**Branch contact** Workplace Relations 93919357

**Applies to** Local Health Districts, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Specialty Network Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations, Public Health System Support Division, NSW Ambulance Service, Public Health Units, Public Hospitals, Cancer Institute (NSW)

**Audience** Medical officers, medical administration, administration, payroll

**Distributed to** Public Health System, NSW Ambulance Service, Ministry of Health, Public Hospitals

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**Policy Manual** Not applicable

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**Status** Active

### Director-General

This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is **mandatory** for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.

## PAYMENT TO MEDICAL OFFICERS UNDERTAKING A CLINICAL APPRAISAL REMOTELY

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy Directive is to set out the policy requirements and procedures which accompany variations made to the *Public Hospital Medical Officers Award* ('the Award') concerning medical officers who undertake a clinical appraisal remotely.

### MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

All NSW Health organisations are required to put processes in place to ensure that the attached requirements are satisfied before payment is made to medical officers for providing a clinical appraisal remotely.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Chief Executives must ensure that the arrangements set out in this Policy Directive are communicated to all relevant medical administration and human resources staff.

Directors of Medical Services or General Managers must ensure that:

- There is full compliance with the terms and conditions of this Policy Directive
- They verify, and if there has been compliance, provide certification using the form provided as an attachment to this Policy Directive that the conditions for the payment of a clinical appraisal provided remotely have been met before payment is made.

### REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Amendment notes
January 2014 PD2014_002	Deputy Director General, Governance, Workplace and Corporate	New

### ATTACHMENTS

1. Procedure: Payment to Medical Officers for Undertaking a Clinical Appraisal Remotely

**PAYMENTS TO MEDICAL OFFICERS UNDERTAKING A  
CLINICAL APPRAISAL REMOTELY**



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**Issue date:** January-2014

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## **1 BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 About this document**

This document sets out the requirements that need to be met for a medical officer to establish an entitlement to be remunerated for undertaking a 'clinical appraisal remotely' within the meaning of clause 12(ix) of the *Public Hospital Medical Officers Award*.

For payment to be made, a medical officer must submit a completed application in the form attached to this Policy Directive.

### **1.2 Key definitions**

**Medical Officer:** means an employee governed by *Public Hospital Medical Officers Award*.

**Hospital:** means a public hospital as defined under section 15 of the *Health Services Act 1997*.

**On-call:** means rostered to be available to attend patients pursuant to an on-call roster prepared by a public health organisation in consultation with the relevant clinical department

**Appropriate overtime rate:** means time and one-half for the first two hours, and double time thereafter, provided that all overtime performed on a Sunday shall be at double time.

### **1.3 Legal and legislative framework**

- *Public Hospital Medical Officers Award*
- *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*
- PD2012\_018 Code of Conduct
- PD2012\_069 Health Care Records – Documentation and Management

## **2 THE VARIATION TO THE AWARD**

The NSW Industrial Relations Commission varied the Public Hospital Medical Officers Award to take effect from the first period on or after 20 December 2013 in the following terms:

### **12. On Call and Call Back**

Existing subclause:

- (ix) Officers required to work overtime after leaving the employer's premises to provide a technology support resolution or clinical appraisal remotely without onsite presence, shall be paid for such work at the appropriate overtime rate, with a minimum payment of one hour at such rates.

New subclause 12(xi):

- (xi) For the purposes of subclause (ix) "clinical appraisal remotely" means as provided in either (a) or (b) below:
  - (a) assessing (by an on-call resident medical officer or registrar) a patient's physical condition to make a diagnosis or a differential diagnosis away from a hospital that incorporates all of the following:
    1. The taking of a telephone call or calls, or receiving an email or emails, from a medical practitioner on duty in a hospital about a patient.
    2. Receiving the history of the patient so that the patient's current medical condition and any relevant past medical history including previous surgery and use of medications, if known, is provided.
    3. Discussing with the medical practitioner on duty the patient's current medical condition and asking questions in respect of the condition as necessary such that the information provided enables an evaluation of the patient's physical condition.
    4. Directing further examination to be conducted as clinically required, and obtaining other clinical information or opinion from other medical practitioners as necessary.
    5. Identifying the likely cause of the patient's condition and providing a diagnosis and a prognosis based on the information provided from undertaking 1 to 4 above.
    6. Ensuring that there is a sufficient clinical justification for the proposed treatment including, if relevant, admission to hospital.
    7. Instructing the medical practitioner on duty in a hospital what course of treatment should be followed including ensuring the proposed treatment is not contra-indicated, being satisfied that such treatment is able to be determined, and can be properly implemented, without requiring the return of the on-call resident medical officer or registrar. This would include developing or confirming a management plan, or varying an existing management plan with the endorsement of the staff specialist or VMO responsible for the care of the patient.
    8. Directing follow-up requirements and subsequently reviewing the patient, if appropriate, based on those requirements.
    9. Complying with relevant NSW Health and local policies, procedures and

directions.

- (b) The provision of a report by an on call registrar on images forwarded electronically in circumstances where:
1. Had the communications technology involved not been utilised the registrar would have had to have returned to the workplace to provide that report; and
  2. There has been prior approval at the facility level to the use, and the conditions of use, of such technology by the registrar.

New subclause 12(xii):

- (xii) A clinical appraisal provided remotely pursuant to subclause (xi) (a) above shall attract a minimum payment of one hour at the appropriate overtime rate only in circumstances where, if it had not been provided remotely, the on-call resident medical officer or registrar would have otherwise needed to have returned to the workplace. Any additional requirement to provide further clinical appraisal falling within the hour from which the initial clinical appraisal commenced shall not attract an additional payment. Any time worked beyond the expiration of one hour shall be paid at overtime rates. Time where work is not being performed will not be counted as time for the purposes of overtime payment.

### **3 PROCEDURES**

- 3.1 (a) A medical officer can only be paid for undertaking a 'clinical appraisal remotely' within the meaning of clause 12(xi) of the *Public Hospital Medical Officers Award* where there has been compliance with relevant NSW Health and local policies and protocols, including:
- (i) The NSW Health policy on the documentation and management of health care records with respect to the provision of all steps involved in the provision of the appraisal; and
  - (ii) The privacy and security of patient records and information.
- 3.2 To claim payment for undertaking a 'clinical appraisal remotely' within the meaning of clause 12(xi) (a) of the *Public Hospital Medical Officers Award*, a medical officer is required to complete the attached application, and in so doing:
- (i) Certify that each of the applicable requirements at clause 12(xi) (a) of the Award has been fulfilled as appropriate, and the time taken in respect of each requirement
  - (ii) Certify that the relevant patient record was updated at the earliest opportunity and in a manner which ensures continuity of patient care
  - (iii) Set out why it was not necessary for the medical officer to return to the hospital
  - (iv) Be counter signed by the medical officer's relevant Director of Medical Services or other relevant medical administrator.

- 3.3 A medical practitioner on duty is not to initiate a phone call or calls, or an email or emails, to an on-call resident medical officer or registrar, about a patient that might give rise to an obligation to make a payment for undertaking a 'clinical appraisal remotely', in circumstances where there is on duty and available in the hospital an appropriately skilled and trained registrar or consultant, unless that registrar or consultant has approved contacting the on-call resident medical officer or registrar and this approval is documented in the patient's medical record. For example, where there is an emergency physician on site, that person should be consulted and approve an emergency department registrar contacting an on call medical officer or registrar.

#### **4 LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Approval form



**Attachment 1: Approval Form**

**MEDICAL OFFICER PAYMENT FOR UNDERTAKING CLINICAL APPRAISAL REMOTELY APPLICATION FORM**

Facility:		Department:	
Family Name:		First Name:	
Employee Number:		Telephone No.	
Email Address:			
<b>Clinical Appraisal Date:</b>	<b>Time Commenced:</b>	<b>Time Completed:</b>	<b>Total Time Spent in Undertaking the Appraisal (not including interruptions and time not spent on the appraisal):</b>
<b>Name of on-site Medical Practitioner who initiated the request for a clinical appraisal:</b>			
<b>Patient Name:</b>		<b>Patient Medical Record No (MRN):</b>	
In the assessment of the patient's physical condition which led to the making of a diagnosis or a differential diagnosis away from the hospital all of the following criteria were met:			

Criteria	Requirement Completed ✓	Time Taken
Received call(s) or email(s) from a medical practitioner on duty in a hospital about a patient		
Received patient history including current medical condition, any relevant past medical history including previous surgery and use of medications if known		
Discussed with on duty medical practitioner the patient's current medical condition, asked questions in respect of the condition as necessary such that the information provided enabled an evaluation of the patient's physical condition		
Directed further examination to be conducted as clinically		

# PAYMENT TO MEDICAL OFFICERS UNDERTAKING A CLINICAL APPRAISAL REMOTELY



Criteria	Requirement Completed ✓	Time Taken
required, and obtained other clinical information or opinion from other medical practitioners as necessary		
Identified the likely cause of the patient's condition and provided a diagnosis and a prognosis based on the information provided		
Ensured that there was sufficient clinical justification for the proposed treatment including, if relevant, admission to hospital		
Instructed the on duty medical practitioner what course of treatment should be followed, including ensuring the proposed treatment is not contra-indicated, being satisfied that such treatment is able to be determined, and can be properly implemented, without requiring the return of the on-call resident medical officer or registrar. This would include developing or confirming a management plan, or varying an existing management plan with the endorsement of the staff specialist or VMO responsible for the care of the patient		
Directed follow-up requirements and subsequently reviewed the patient, if appropriate, based on those requirements.		
Complied with the relevant NSW Health and local policies, procedures and directions		
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>		

Summary of Appraisal Provided:

**To be completed by the Medical Officer applying for payment:**

I hereby certify that:

- I. The information provided in this application is accurate.
- II. I have updated the patient's record for the patient in respect of whom the appraisal was provided at the earliest opportunity and in a manner that ensures continuity of patient care.
- III. The medical practitioner who initiated the request for the appraisal confirmed to me that he or she sought to consult with any appropriate available medical staff on duty in the hospital and the reason for calling an on-call medical officer was as follows:
- IV. The reason why it was not necessary to return to the hospital to undertake the appraisal is as follows:

<b>Signature of Medical Officer:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

**To be completed by the Director of Medical Services or other relevant medical administrator:**

I hereby certify that:  
the Medical Officer has complied with the terms and conditions as set out in the Policy Directive *Payment to Medical Officers for Undertaking a Clinical Appraisal Remotely* PD2014\_002, and that payment at the appropriate overtime rate can be made.

<b>Print Name:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	