

23rd April 2009

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Men's Health
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Dear Committee members,

Further to my submission of 27th February 2009. I wish to make a brief supplementary submission.

In my initial submission, I brought the Committee's attention to the fact that there was no Medicare rebate for magnetic resonance imaging of the prostate (MRI) and further that the costs incurred by men having the scans did not count towards the Medicare safety net. MRI scans have been shown to better visualise the prostate than computerised tomography (CT) scans and it may be important for the staging of the disease and ongoing management that men have MRI scans performed.

Due to a chance conversation, I have become aware that there is provision in the Medical Benefits Schedule for rebates for MRI scans relating to female specific cancers. Item numbers 63464 and 63467 refer to MRI scans for screening those at high risk of breast cancer. Item numbers 63473 and 63470 refer to MRI scans for the staging of cervical cancer. If these item numbers instead referred to the screening and staging of prostate cancer, I think it would be widely regarded that it would be unfair to women with breast or cervical cancer. I would ask the Committee to consider whether the current situation is unfair to men with prostate cancer and investigate how it is this situation has arisen.

Yours sincerely,
Kenneth Newton