

APPENDIX 9

INTERIM PROCEDURE FOR INDEPENDENT MEDICAL OPINIONS

1. An external opinion forwarded to GSL or DIMIA must be brought to the attention of the International Health and Medical Services (IHMS) Health Services Manager (and also Professional Support Services (PSS) where the opinion relates to mental health) for immediate forwarding to the detainee's treating physician (ie the General Practitioner, and Medical Specialist and/or the treating Psychiatrist). Where the external opinion received is at odds with the detainee's care plan and the detainee's treating practitioner/s do not have the same clinical and professional qualification as the person who has provided the external opinion (for example, where a psychiatrist has provided an opinion and the detainee has not been assessed by a psychiatrist but is being treated by a psychologist) arrangements must be made immediately to have the detainee assessed at the same level of clinical and professional qualification as the person who has provided the external opinion.
2. Where IHMS is provided directly with an opinion from an external medical service provider that is at odds with the health care plan developed for the detainee, DIMIA must be notified immediately.
3. Written confirmation of receipt of the opinion and advice that this will be referred to the detainee's treating doctor must be provided to the person who provided the external opinion.
4. The detainee's treating doctor must be requested to review the individual detainee's health care plan in light of the opinion provided. The treating doctor is under no obligation to follow the alternative advice. However, the treating Doctor's opinion and advice (drawing on specialist advice as necessary) as to the impact on the current treatment plan and an explanation for any divergence from the recommended course of action suggested by the external party must be noted on the detainee's medical file.
5. Where the detainee's treating Doctor has an alternative view to that expressed by an external medical services provider, the Department must be advised in writing within seven working days so that a review of the detainee and all relevant material can be sought from a suitably qualified independent party (for example a Health Services Australia medical practitioner).¹

1 RANZCP, *Submission 205*, p. 49.