



# Review of the Radiation Oncology Health Program Grants Scheme

## Stakeholder information bulletin

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### Background

The Radiation Oncology Health Program Grants (ROHPG) Scheme was established in 1988 to support the purchase of new and replacement linear accelerators (LINACs) (or other high-cost radiotherapy equipment). Recognising the importance of radiation oncology services in the treatment of cancer patients, the objectives of the ROHPG scheme are to assist in:

- improving health outcomes for cancer patients
- ensuring adequate and equitable access to radiation oncology services for Australian cancer patients
- improving equity of access for cancer patients, and
- maintaining the quality and safety of radiation oncology equipment.

In 2016, the Scheme was reviewed and updated to ensure currency and to streamline administration processes for both the Department and radiotherapy providers. Key changes made to the Scheme were implemented in 2017 and are summarised below.

Major area of change	Pre-2017	2017 onwards
Set grant value of \$3 million	Multiple applications for actual costs of radiotherapy equipment (external beam radiotherapy and brachytherapy), plus supporting infrastructure such as simulators and software. Resulting in varying grant amounts for recipients.	Set contribution of \$3 million for all high value capital equipment (LINACs) associated with providing external beam radiation therapy accessed through a single grant application.
Timing of payments	Payments, made by Dept of Human Services, were made monthly based on actual service provision as recorded by the volume of relevant Medicare services provided.	Set annual payments made by Dept of Health (conditional on provision of a valid dosimetry audit certificate) - \$300,000 per annum for 10 years for public facilities, \$375,000 per year for 8 years for private facilities.
Processing time	Lengthier application process with varying approval times.	A streamlined application process for replacement equipment.
New facility applications	New facilities or expansion assessed in an ongoing process which limited the ability to compare multiple applications for the same area and unfairly advantaged early applications.	Applications for new facilities or expansion assessed based on national needs analysis informed by stakeholders within jurisdictional government. Set application period for newly identified priority areas to enable comparative assessment of applications.

### 2020 Review of the Radiation Oncology Health Program Grants Scheme

The Australian Government Department of Health (the Department) engaged Healthcare Management Advisors (HMA) to undertake a review of the ROHPG Scheme.

The key objective of the 2020 ROHPG review is to assess the **impact of the changes made to the Scheme in 2017**. The broad areas of the 2020 review are:

- the ongoing appropriateness of the ROHPG
- the effectiveness of the Scheme in meeting the program’s objectives
- the efficient and effective administration of the ROHPG Scheme, and
- appropriate accountability for ROHPG Scheme funds.

## Project method and timing

HMA will undertake the project in six stages as follows:

- **Stage 1:** Project initiation to confirm the scope and preferred method for the project (August 2020)
- **Stage 2:** Develop review framework and consultation strategy (September 2020)
- **Stage 3:** Situation analysis, including literature and data review (September 2020)
- **Stage 4:** Stakeholder consultation (October 2020)
- **Stage 5:** Triangulation of information, analysis, and draft final report (November 2020)
- **Stage 6:** Final report (November 2020).

## Proposed stakeholders

HMA will engage with a range of stakeholders to understand the impact of changes to the ROHPG Scheme and inform the review assessment processes. Proposed stakeholders include (but are not limited to):

- Radiotherapy providers and ROHPG recipients
- Radiation oncologists/therapists
- Safety agencies
- Peak professional bodies
- Consumer advocacy groups
- Jurisdiction Departments of Health
- Australian Government Department of Health personnel, and
- LINAC producers.

## HMA team

The HMA consulting team will be led by Dr Deborah Roczo, Director HMA. Other team members include Dr Rick Ghosh (independent consultant), Darryn Lobo (Senior Consultant) and Anvi Le (Consultant).

## Contact details

For further information on the project, please contact:

### Healthcare Management Advisors

Dr Deborah Roczo, Director

m: 0416 075 749

e: [deborahroczo@hma.com.au](mailto:deborahroczo@hma.com.au)