



The Royal
Australian and
New Zealand
College of
Radiologists

Mr Roy Carey
President, Spine Society of Australia
Suite 34, 3rd Floor
166 Gipps Street
East Melbourne
VIC 3002

Dear Mr Carey

Provision of Diagnostic Imaging Services to Spine Surgeons

I refer to Mr Swinbourne letter of 6 November 2006 regarding your Society's concerns about the provision of images on CDs and related matters. The issues you have raised have been considered by several groups within the College and we hope the following comments are helpful and propose an appropriate way forward.

The central issue is one of standards, which is not essentially about images presented on film versus CD, but about communication between referrers and radiology providers and the usability of images. Clearly what individual practices choose to do is a matter for them to determine on the basis of their own assessment of their referrers' requirements. This may be film, CD and film, or CD alone. The overriding issue, however, is that the images provided should be clinically useful.

The College is currently preparing a draft consultation version of its standards for accreditation of practices. In the light of your Society's comments and similar concerns expressed by the Australian Society of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the Australian Orthopaedic Association, we propose to develop a standard which addresses the need for communication between referrers and practices regarding the format of the provision of images to referrers. In addition, we propose upon discussion with the relevant stakeholders to develop a standard which can inform the purchase and setup of digital imaging systems so that CDs are a viable alternative. There is, for example, a German standard under development which is designed to address this matter. Products are available which produce a very usable consistent CD with report incorporated.

In the meantime:

- in the interests of providing constructive feedback to our College members from referrers, we shall distribute your letter in its entirety to the membership;
- we shall send your letter and this reply to major PACS equipment vendors so that they are aware of the functional requirements for studies presented on CD; and
- we shall draw these issues to the attention of the Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association.

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In addition, the College is conducting a major program on the Quality Use of Diagnostic Imaging (QUDI) which involves a large number of projects focusing on consumers, referrers, radiology providers, and economic sustainability. One such project is looking at referrers' requirements and we would welcome the input of interested surgical societies to this project. The QUDI Program Manager, Ms Jane Grimm, will provide you with information on the project in the near future.

Please do not hesitate to contact me again if you have questions or concerns about our approach to addressing the matters you have raised.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Kenny', with a long, sweeping underline.

Liz Kenny
President

12 December 2006

Cc:

Dr P McCombe - Secretary, Spine Society of Australia
Mr M Rogers - President, Neurosurgical Society of Australasia
Mr G Speck - Chairman, Australian Society of Orthopaedic Surgeons
Mr S Milgate – National Coordinator, Australian Society of Orthopaedic Surgeons
Mr J Harris - President, Australian Orthopaedic Association
Mr B Love - Melbourne Joint Replacement
Dr M Guerin - CMO, Symbion Health
Dr M Haikerwal – President, Australian Medical Association
Ms P Beerens – CEO, Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association