

Private practice in the public health sector

Department of Health Policy

QH-POL-403:2015

1. Statement

To ensure private practice activities in the Queensland public health sector are sustainable, support patient choice and workforce retention.

2. Purpose

The intent of this policy is to achieve the following outcomes:

- An established and documented governance framework for private practice in the Queensland public health sector
- Private practice arrangements in operation at the Department of Health are supported by a written agreement or contract schedule between the employer's approved delegate and the practitioner/entity performing the service/s
- Standardised fees levied to clinicians engaging in private practice activities
- Private practice enhances and supports the delivery of public practice
- Patients are provided with the choice to be treated as a public or private patient in accordance with the National Health Care Agreement.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and consultants within the Department of Health divisions and business units.

4. Principles

- **Consistency:** contracts and agreements regarding private practice in the Queensland public health sector facilities are consistent
- **Efficiency and value:** private practice is conducted in a way that supports overall service sustainability and best use of public resources
- **Managed:** private practice is actively managed and monitored by relevant Department of Health divisions (e.g. Health Support Queensland)
- **Simplicity and transparency:** obligations, performance criteria and fees for private practice are accessible, clear and consistent
- **Patient centred:** private practice is conducted in a way that prioritises patients' needs
- **Value for money:** private practice is conducted in a way that is financially sustainable in the benefits it creates.

5. Legislation

- *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 (QLD)*
- *Health Insurance Act 1973 (C'wth)*
- *Private Health Insurance Act 2007 (C'wth)*

6. Supporting documents

- Guideline to patient billing practices in the Queensland public health sector
- Health Employment Directive 8/14 Visiting Medical Officers – Employment Framework
- Health Service Directive – Private practice in the Queensland public health sector
- Health Service Directive – Fees and Charges for Health Care Services
- National Healthcare Agreement 2020
- National Health Reform Agreement 2020-25
- Private practice in the Queensland public health sector framework
- Private practice in the Queensland public health sector standard
- Queensland Health – Fees and Charges Register

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
Clinician	An individual who provides diagnosis, or treatment, as a professional: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) medical practitionerb) nursec) allied health practitioner; or,d) Health practitioner not covered by paragraph a), b) or c) (National Health Reform Act 2011).
Department of Health	The Department of Health includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Division• Clinical Excellence Queensland• Corporate Services Division• eHealth Queensland• Health Support Queensland• Healthcare Purchasing and System Performance Division• Prevention Division• Strategy, Policy and Planning Division

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Director-General any successor agency of those listed above however so named.
Granted Private Practice	A limited right to provide professional services to private patients on the terms of a Senior Medical Officer's Granted Private Practice Agreement or on the terms of Schedule 3 of a Visiting Medical Officer's Employment Contract.
Medical officer/practitioner	A medical practitioner who is registered with the Medical Board of Australia under the Health Practitioner Registration National Law Act 2009.
Medical services	Any of the medical services set out in Schedule 1 of the Health Insurance Act 1973.
Private patient	A person who could receive treatment free of charge under the National Health Reform Agreement 2020-25 but who has elected to be treated privately in the public system, or a person who agrees to be a fee paying patient of the medical officer and makes this election on the basis of informed financial consent.
Private practice	<p>Any contractual arrangement between the Department of Health or a HHS and clinical staff with these features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The medical treatment of a patient who has elected to be a private patient in respect to informed financial consent Clinical staff treating the private patient uses their Medicare Provider Number to facilitate billing where applicable
Public patient	In relation to a hospital, means a person in respect of whom the hospital provides comprehensive care, including all necessary medical, nursing and diagnostic services and, if they are available at the hospital, dental and paramedical services, by means of its own staff or by other agreed arrangements (Health Insurance Act 1973).
Queensland Health	The accumulative body of the Department of Health, support agencies and HHSs.
Scope of clinical practice	The extent of an individual practitioner's approved clinical practice within a particular organisation based on the individual's credentials, competence, performance and professional suitability and the needs and capability of the organisation to support the practitioner's scope of clinical practice.

Version Control

Version	Date	Comments
1	25 February 2014	New policy developed in consultation with Health Systems Support Agency in line with Health Service Directive – Private practice in the Queensland public health sector.
2	16 October 2015	Update of current policy reflecting changes to the employment arrangements for medical officers.
3	16 September 2020	Update of current policy/standard reflecting changes to the Health Service Directive – Private practice in the Queensland public health sector.