

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 22**  
**Asked on 6 February 2007**

MR DEMPSEY asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)-

**QUESTION:**

With reference to the large number of Bundaberg renal patients who travel by train to Brisbane for a twenty minute procedure with their day starting at 4am and concluding by 10pm if everything goes as planned-

Will Queensland Health assist the Bundaberg Hospital to get a vascular surgeon to fly in for a short time per month to alleviate this situation, reduce travel time and emotional stress for patients and the added costs to Queensland Health?

**ANSWER:**

On average 5-6 patients per month require referral to the vascular team at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH), however it is acknowledged that the demand fluctuates.

Rural facilities do not have designated vascular surgeons on staff as they are based in tertiary centres, the closest being the RBWH in Brisbane.

Bundaberg Base Hospital currently refers all clients requiring interventional radiology services and associated renal vascular access to the RBWH, as this is the only facility where interventional radiologists insert tunneled cuff central lines. At present Bundaberg Base Hospital provides minimal interventional radiology services limited to minor biopsy type procedures.

The RBWH has employed a dedicated Clinical Nurse to coordinate vascular access for the Central Area. This role provides staff with a single point of contact to coordinate appointments, vessel mapping and ultrasound procedures. The referral process has resulted in reduction in waiting time for urgent procedures for Bundaberg patients. The coordinator is fully aware of reducing visits and travel to Brisbane for patients and attempts to coordinate appointments for different specialist to reduce the number of trips. It is rare for a patient to only require a twenty minute procedure as this may only occur once per year. Patients are generally reviewed by a number of specialists during their visits.

Queensland Health and the Bundaberg Base Hospital support patients with the costs associated with traveling to Brisbane for clinical appointments and procedures with the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme.

It is clinically beneficial to access Vascular Surgeons in tertiary facilities as these procedures require specialised equipment, staff and facilities for optimal patient outcomes.