

Question on Notice

No. 832

Asked on 17 June 2021

MS R BATES ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES (HON Y D'ATH) –

QUESTION

With reference to advice that current Queensland Health requirements for Nurse Practitioners necessitate that a provider number be used when referring patients between health services or health teams, placing Nurse Practitioners in a position which defies current Commonwealth Legislation—

Will the Minister advise what, if any, plans are in place to alleviate these restrictions on the ability for Nurse Practitioners to issue patient referrals?

ANSWER

Nurse practitioners in Queensland Health could issue patient referrals in line with policies in Queensland Health, the requirements of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* and Medicare policy.

There is no requirement for a Nurse Practitioner to use a provider number to raise requests or referrals between public health services or health teams.

An example of why a Queensland Health Nurse Practitioner may have a provider number is under the exemptions outlined in section 19(2) of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*. This exemption allows eligible sites to claim against the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) for non-admitted, non-referred professional services provided in public emergency departments and outpatient clinic settings. One of the priorities for this exemption is improved access to primary health care services in rural and remote hospital and health services.

When referring to private services, a Nurse Practitioner would be required to have a provider number, enabling patients to claim under the MBS for non-admitted services provided in private outpatient clinic settings.