



Date: 20 December 2019

Email: contact@sira.nsw.gov.au

Dear Doctor,

**State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) 2020 medical fees schedules for
Orthopaedic Surgeons**

I am writing to advise you of the gazettal of the new maximum rates for medical practitioners, which are applicable for services provided on and after 1 January 2020.

Indexation has been applied to the following Fees Orders:

- *Workers Compensation (Medical Practitioner Fees) Order 2020*
- *Workers Compensation (Orthopaedic Surgeon Fees) Order 2020*
- *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation (Medical Examinations and Reports Fees) Order 2020*

The above listed Fees Orders have been attached for your information. The updated Fees Orders will also be available on the SIRA website prior to 1 January 2020 via the [SIRA list of publications](#) webpage.

The maximum rates gazetted for medical consultations and procedures are as contained in the *AMA List of Medical Services and Fees* dated 1 November 2019, unless otherwise specified in the *Workers Compensation (Orthopaedic Surgeon Fees) Order 2020*.

SIRA would like to highlight the following changes to the Medical Fees Orders;

- Further clarification regarding billing for assistance at operation:
 - assistance at operation fees are not payable to health practitioners who are not a medical practitioner e.g. perioperative nurse
 - assistance at operation fee is 20% of the surgeon's fee for surgical procedure/s performed, but only those surgical procedure/s where an assistant is allowed for in the MBS, or \$393.20, whichever is the greater
 - assistance at operation is only payable once per eligible item number performed by the principal Surgeon/medical practitioner irrespective of the number of medical practitioners providing assistance
 - medical practitioner/s providing assistance at operation are to invoice for their services separately to the principal Surgeon/medical practitioner.
- Clarification that fees for subsequent specialist consultations includes provision of a report to the referring doctor and copy to the insurer.

Medical practitioners are reminded that to bill an AMA item, they must be confident they have fulfilled the service requirements as specified in the item descriptor. Where a comprehensive item is used, separate items cannot be claimed for any of the individual items included in the comprehensive service.

Orthopaedic Surgeons are reminded that for surgical procedures they may bill 150% of the AMA List fee for the primary item number only.

SIRA has an increased focus on inappropriate servicing and billing practices and is currently investigating the billing behaviours of numerous health practitioners. Non-compliance with the Fees Orders is serious.

To avoid overcharging and complaints, we encourage medical practitioners to:

- familiarise themselves with SIRA's Fees Orders, including the maximum rates, billing rules and other relevant guidance material, available at <https://www.sira.nsw.gov.au/for-service-providers/A-Z-of-service-providers/doctors-and-other-medical-professionals>
- check whether their patient/s have an active workers compensation claim
- understand the service definitions in Fees Orders and for invoices to accurately reflect the service provided in accordance with those definitions
- charge no more than the maximum fee set out in the Fees Order/s for the service provided.

Please note: Legislation prohibits a worker being billed a gap fee between the maximum fee stated in the Fees Order and any additional charge requested by the health practitioner.

The current health care review will undertake further research on options for fees regulation throughout 2020. There will be opportunities for stakeholders to provide input as part of that process.

If you have any enquiries about the medical fees, please email contact@sira.nsw.gov.au or call SIRA Customer Service Centre on 13 10 50.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Petrina Casey". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light blue rectangular background.

Dr Petrina Casey
Director, Health Policy, Prevention and Supervision
State Insurance Regulatory Authority