



Mr. David Walters
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Dr Glenn Edwards
Pathology Director
SA Pathology

Via email: Health.SAPathologyExecutive@sa.gov.au

Dear Dr Edwards

Re: SA Pathology Proposed Operational Configuration and Workforce Model

On behalf of the South Australian Regional Committee of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS), I thank you for the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

Our main concern with the proposed reconfiguration of pathology services is the reliance the new model places on the Enterprise Patient Administration System (EPAS). The desire to move towards an electronic based model is understandable; however any system reliant on technology involves inherent risk. Inevitably at some point technical difficulties will occur. In a health setting where even minor glitches can lead to catastrophic outcomes, it is crucial that these risks are mitigated, and disruptions are prevented wherever possible.

Since it was first introduced to South Australian hospitals in 2013, RACS and a number of other medical organisations have repeatedly expressed serious concern with the reliability and functionality of the EPAS system. We have previously raised these concerns directly with the Health Minister following a number of system glitches and technical outages. Despite the intention to roll-out EPAS across the state's hospital network, it looks unlikely that the system will be functional at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital for some time after the facility opens.

Therefore, the reconfiguration of services must not occur until it can be guaranteed that the systems are robust, compatible and able to cope with the demands that will be placed upon them. It is essential that if the state's pathology services are to be 'modernised' that the supporting infrastructure is thoroughly stress tested and proper contingency plans are readily available, regularly reviewed, and clearly communicated to those affected by the changes.

RACS appreciates the opportunity to provide its expertise to government reviews and would be willing to discuss specific concerns about the impact of pathology services on surgical services and patient outcomes.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr. David Walters
Chair, SA Regional Committee