



CIRCULAR NO. (06/2022)

From	:	Department of Healthcare Professions/ Ministry of Public Health
To	:	All Healthcare Facilities in the State of Qatar concerned with Diagnostic Radiology Services (Governmental and Private sectors)
Subject	:	Recognition of Teleradiology Services and Defining diagnostic tele-radiology physicians' registration requirements and quality standards.
Date	:	22 May 2022

Greetings from Ministry of Public Health,

The Department of Healthcare Professions (DHP) seeks to keep pace with the successive development in medical care technology, and to consider the continuous progress in communication technologies, which have facilitated access to various health services, facilitated the provision of remote medical consultations, as well as support communication and exchange of information between health care practitioners.

In its pursuit to ensure the quality of health services introduced to the Qatari society; DHP has developed a policy to regulate Teleradiology services, define registration requirements and quality standards. This policy and others like aim to standardize services and care, regardless of their delivery modalities, and whether these services are personal provided in the healthcare facility, or just a medical consultation available electronically.

This policy is considered an introduction to a more comprehensive policy that includes many healthcare services Telemedicine approach can contribute to facilitating access to them. Cooperation with qualified external healthcare practitioners at a world-class level is adopted in many global health systems, and will support fulfilling the growing demand of the local health sector.

As per this policy, licensed diagnostic radiologists can apply for a locum license through a licensed employer in the State of Qatar. They are not required to come to the country and work in. Their practice is limited to interpreting radiology images sent to them and writing medical reports. They have to be available electronically to discuss and reply to the treating physician' inquiries.

The mentioned diagnostic radiologists have to fulfill all locum physician' technical requirements including the academic qualifications and work experience. However, they are exempted from the requirements of medical examination, CPR, CPD. They shall submit an attested police clearance from MOFA, submit their certificate of good standing for verification by one of the accredited companies, and attach the verification report to their applications. Regarding the medical/surgical privileges, healthcare facilities are authorized to decide in this regard on a case-by-case basis.

The concerned healthcare facilities shall be committed to quality standards including: Patient's data and reports secure transfer and storage, teleradiologist reasonable access to patient' information including medical history and previous reports in a timely manner, quality of images electronically transmitted, and comprehensive contractual agreement illustrating the legal and medical responsibilities of both parties.

For all information, please check the attached policy.

Thank you for your cooperation

Department of Healthcare Professions /Ministry of Public Health

For inquiries, please contact the following emails:

dhregistration@moph.gov.qa



Policy Name: Teleradiology regulation
Policy Code: MOPH/DHP/Reg./BL
Version Number: 1
Developed by: Registration Section - DHP
Reviewed by/Date:
Approved by/ Date:
Date Effective:
Date of Due Revision: TBD
<p>Validity: This policy is the main and valid policy until updated, replaced or canceled by Department of Healthcare Professions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update, replacement or cancellation of this policy may occur when needed. However, all healthcare practitioners and parties shall comply with this policy.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Revision History

Name	Date	Changes	Version

Reviews by REGISTRATION DEPARTMENT - DHP

Name	Date	Organization/Position	Version

Submitted false or misleading experience certificate to obtain a license



1. Introduction & background

Teleradiology is the practice of transmission of patients' radiological images between different locations to produce a primary report, expert second opinion or clinical review. The different locations can be within the same organization or between organizations, within the same country or across international boundaries.

Top Five drivers of Teleradiology

1. Shortage of Radiologists in certain countries/regions.
2. COVID-19 impact which is contributing to a surge in patients requiring diagnostic examinations, such as chest X-ray or computed tomography (CT).
3. Increased demand for more specialized modalities due to the clear relationship between the complexity of a diagnostic examination and the length of read time.
4. Increased use of cloud-based technology which makes the implementing of information technology (IT) for teleradiology less complex.
5. Technology advances in improving the three key ingredients of a successful teleradiology service — speed, accuracy and workflow/decision support, for instance:
6. The DHP has received a request from the main healthcare facilities mainly HMC, Sidra and Qatar Armed Forces asking for regulation and approval of teleradiology as an approach to overcome the above-mentioned challenges.

2. Policy Statement

- **DHP mandates the reporting radiologist (from outside Qatar) to be licensed by DHP as a locum and fulfill all the licensing requirements / standards including verification, qualification, and experience requirements (see appendix A).**
- In addition, the DHP Standard on Teleradiology provides that «physicians who provide the official, authenticated interpretation of images transmitted by teleradiology should maintain licensure appropriate to delivery of radiologic services at both the transmitting and receiving sites. A physician also should be credentialed by and have medical staff privileges at every facility at which he or she provides imaging services.
- The purpose of DHP mandating out-of-Qatar physicians to obtain and maintain a license to practice teleradiology is to ensure high quality medical care and professional integrity in the practice of radiology by establishing guidelines for standards of care governing outsourcing of radiologists' services.

3. Definitions:

Teleradiology

is the practice of transmission of patients' radiological images between different locations to produce a primary report, expert second opinion or clinical review? The different locations can be within the same organization or between organizations, within the same country or across international boundaries.

Reporting Radiologist is the physician who will not be physically present within the State of Qatar and will be remotely participating in reporting cases through the teleradiology program/ solutions.

4. Abbreviations

- DHP: Department of HealthCare Professions.
- HCPs: Healthcare Practitioners.



5. Scope

This policy applies to:

Radiologist physicians working from remotely from outside Qatar as per contractual agreement with healthcare facility based in Qatar.

6. Guidelines/procedures

- The reporting radiologist should sign a patient confidentiality form Plus conflict-of-interest declaration.
- Teleradiology should enhance and complement local diagnostic services and there must be no overall detriment to the quality of diagnostic imaging services in the healthcare system in Qatar
- The use of teleradiology should not undermine the normal clinical workflows within the radiology department
- There should be an uninterrupted flow of data from the point of request for imaging to the acknowledgement of receipt of the imaging report by the requesting clinician. These standards reflect that the patient should benefit from the same quality of care as in the optimized hospital setting. The safety and wellbeing of the patient should be the priority and primary focus. First and foremost, all teleradiology relationships should be patient centered’.
- Since teleradiology is not always provided as part of an integrated healthcare system with clear patient pathways. Thus, the following general framework standards need to be fulfilled for the transmission of data, the reporting of that data, the communication of the results and quality assurance of the reports. Patient safety and confidentiality are paramount There should be regular audit of this by DHP.

Standard 1 Data transfer: there should be clear and transparent systems in place for rapid, secure transfer and review of images and, where necessary, storage of patient data. Data transfer must be secure so that patient confidentiality is maintained. Technical standards evolve and data transfer must reflect this. There should be no inappropriate delays in data transfer. Healthcare facilities should strive to ensure the data is as easy to appropriately view outside as inside their organization.

Standard 2 Reporting: reporting must be to the same standard independent of where and by whom the data is reported. Teleradiologists must have access to the same breadth of patient information as they would in the base healthcare facility. This must include patient details, current and previous clinical information, previous examinations (reports and images) and laboratory data. The data must be viewed in an environment using equipment (hardware and software) of at least the same standard as would be expected in the facility.

Standard 3 Communication of the results: the same person should interpret the examination and issue the report to the referring clinician and should be clearly identified, with the results communicated and integrated into the base hospital’s radiology information system picture archiving and communications system (PACS) and electronic patient record (EPR) in a timely manner. Where results are especially urgent, the teleradiologist should be able to have a discussion with the referrer and/or the responsible clinician. The reporting radiologist should be available for ongoing discussions and any clarifications of the initial report. Any verbal opinions given during discussions must be documented.

Standard 4 Quality assurance: teleradiology should be part of an integrated radiology service and be subject to the same governance framework as the rest of the service, with all participating radiologists working within a clearly documented quality assurance framework in line with institution guidelines.

- **The healthcare facility will have the full responsibility of implementing the standards** in order to ensure quality of care and patient safety with alignment of whole service approved standards.
- There should be a comprehensive contractual agreement between the facility and teleradiology provider The medico-legal responsibilities of the referring healthcare facility and those of the reporting teleradiology service must be clearly defined.



- For any transferred images, and in case of any technical errors or issues. the remote technical teams should be available to fix any future issues at the remote facility either inside or outside Qatar.

7. References

Standards for the provision of teleradiology within the United Kingdom Second edition https://www.rcr.ac.uk/system/files/publication/field_publication_files/telerad_standards.pdf

<https://www.theabr.org/>

<https://www.acr.org/>

https://books.google.com.qa/books?id=fWG992BSyc8C&pg=SA1-PA25&lpq=SA1-PA25&dq=guidelines+for+standards+of+care+governing+outsourcing+of+radiologists%E2%80%99+services+ACR&source=bl&ots=SBCFzoF9J8&sig=ACfU3U1jmFRu-m7fF_zzFDSdmRBM__rH2Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiZ1oC-ofz1AhVWSPEDHVUOA_cQ6AF6BAgPEAM#v=onepage&q=guidelines%20for%20standards%20of%20care%20governing%20outsourcing%20of%20radiologists%E2%80%99%20services%20ACR&f=false

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350148685_Teleradiology_public-private_partnerships_in_Saudi_Arabia_a_review

8. Related Policies/Circulars/Guidelines

- Guidelines related to physicians' registration & licensing
- Circular 23/2020

Attachments

N/A

Appendix A (Requirements for registration and licensing)

The applicant should fulfil all the requirements for evaluation and licensing for locum physicians except the following:

- waive the following requirements (not needed) :
 1. Medical Test & chest X-Ray.
 2. CPR courses.
 3. QID.
 4. CPD/CME point requirements for renewal
- Amendments of the following requirements:
 1. Police Clearance shall be from the home country and attested by MOFA of his country and the Qatari empathy in that country.
 2. The certificate of good standing from the concerned authority shall be verified by a verification company.
- Privileging the teleradiology's physicians can be delegated to the institutional privileging committee (HMC & SIDRA) , other facilities to be discussed on a case by case bases .