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## MEDIA RELEASE

# HCF FUNDS INNOVATIVE STUDY INTO MAKING JOINT SURGERY MORE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE

- **HCF's Research Foundation funds innovative research study into the broader adoption of short-stay joint replacement care models in Australia.**
- **Estimated \$641 million in savings could be achieved across public and private health systems over the next seven years.**
- **Cost savings of up to \$1,400 per joint replacement surgery by 2030.**
- **Additional capacity for up to 100,000 joint replacements could be undertaken across public/private systems between 2023-2030.**
- **Implementing short-stay joint replacement programs nationally would provide people with greater access to affordable, convenient care options while reducing unnecessary strain on our healthcare system.**

**TUESDAY 1 AUGUST, 2023:** A ground-breaking study into the benefits of short-stay joint replacement care could revolutionise Australia's healthcare system, saving up to \$641 million over the next seven years and reducing the burden of overcrowded wait lists for Australia's ageing population.

Launched today by the HCF Research Foundation, Australia's leading non-Government funder of health services research, the findings call for the adoption of rapid recovery joint replacement surgery programs proven internationally, but yet to be widely adopted here in Australia.

With an estimated 120,000 hip and knee replacements performed in Australia annually (expected to rise to 241,000 procedures by 2030), our ageing population, together with pandemic restrictions on elective surgery, is set to put considerable strain on the Australian health system in the years ahead.

HCF Chief Officer of Member Health, Julie Andrews, said the innovative study evidences the clear need for safe and efficient alternate models of care to ensure the long-term sustainability of the healthcare sector in Australia.

"Rapid recovery surgery programs have been introduced in many countries but are not common in Australia. This study provides compelling proof short-stay joint replacement programs are not only clinically safe but support efficient use of scarce health resources and have the potential to realise significant savings for the healthcare system," Ms Andrews said.

"Our budget impact analysis suggests the new model of joint replacement care will drive potential cost savings across the system of \$641 million over the next seven years with potential savings of up to \$1,400 per joint replacement procedure by 2030."

Funded via an HCF Research Foundation Innovation Grant and led by Professor Ilana Ackerman at Monash University in collaboration with a multidisciplinary team including health economists Professor Zanfina Ademi and Dr Melanie Lloyd, the study is the first of its kind in Australia and will be critical to guiding future health policy and implementation initiatives.

"We know the cost saving and other benefits that could be achieved by implementing these models across Australia when compared with traditional or usual care," Professor Ackerman said.

"This research highlights the key enablers for translation into policy and practice and provides hard evidence that implementation of short-stay joint replacement programs at a national level have the potential to generate a significant return on investment for the health system and funders of health care if the identified barriers can be addressed."

The study forms part of the HCF Research Foundation's mission to fund research that improves health outcomes through the equitable and efficient delivery of healthcare services for the benefit of HCF members and all Australians.

"With an expected increase in joint replacement demand driven by an ageing population, longer life expectancy and a higher rate of obesity, we must continue to remain at the forefront of healthcare innovation, looking for new ways to offer Australians access to affordable, safe and convenient out-of-hospital care options," Julie Andrews said.

Details: <https://www.hcf.com.au/about-us/hcf-foundation>

**For more information on any of the projects or for any further media enquiries please contact:**

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#### **ABOUT HCF**

HCF, Australia's largest not-for-profit health fund protecting Australians since 1932, covers more than 1.9 million members with health and life insurance, and travel and pet insurance. HCF has been awarded Outstanding Value Health Insurance by Canstar seven years in a row from 2016-2022. On average over the last ten years, HCF has paid out more cents in every dollar in premiums to members as benefits than the industry average. To learn more about HCF go to **[hcf.com.au/about-us](https://www.hcf.com.au/about-us)**