



Continuing MBS Telehealth Services

Nurse Practitioners

Last updated: 24 January 2022

- MBS telehealth services introduced on a temporary basis in response to the COVID-19 pandemic will now be permanent. Telehealth services provided by GPs, medical practitioners, nurse practitioners, participating midwives, allied health providers and dental practitioners in the practice of oral and maxillofacial surgery services will continue. The MBS telehealth items are available to nurse practitioners.
- A service may only be provided by telehealth where it is safe and clinically appropriate to do so.
- The MBS telehealth items are for out-of-hospital patients.
- Providers are expected to obtain informed financial consent from patients prior to providing the service; providing details regarding their fees, including any out-of-pocket costs.

What are the changes?

- From 1 January 2022 the COVID-19 Nurse Practitioner telehealth services introduced in response to the pandemic will continue to be available, this will include:
 - MBS items 91178, 91179, 91180, 91189, 91193, 91190, 91191 and 91192.

As the Government progresses MBS modernisation, telehealth items will be consolidated into a single national program. This means that the now-obsolete items introduced in 2011 will be progressively removed, this will include telehealth specialist (video only) location specific services as well as the associated nurse practitioner patient-end support services.

Why are the changes being made?

The Australian Government committed on 13 December 2021 to make telehealth services that were introduced in response to COVID-19 a permanent part of Medicare. The introduction of these telehealth services has been a critical part of the COVID-19 National Health Plan and transformational to Australia's universal health care program. Telehealth will continue to offer greater flexibility to patients and health care providers.

Bringing consistency across the telehealth program will streamline Medicare, making it easier and ensure equitable access for all Australians.

Who is eligible?

The MBS telehealth items are available for a range of consultations. All Medicare eligible Australians can now receive these services.



What telehealth options are available?

Videoconference services are the preferred approach for substituting a face-to-face consultation. However, providers will also be able to offer audio-only services via telephone if video is not available. There are separate items available for the audio-only services.

No specific equipment is required to provide Medicare-compliant telehealth services. Practitioners must ensure that their chosen telecommunications solution meets their clinical requirements and satisfies privacy laws. To assist providers with their privacy obligations, a privacy checklist for telehealth services has been made available on MBSOnline: <http://www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/Factsheet-TelehealthPrivChecklist>. Further information can be found on the [Australian Cyber Security Centre website](#).

What does this mean for providers?

The telehealth items allow nurse practitioners to continue to deliver essential health care services to patients within their care. The telehealth MBS items can substitute for current face-to-face consultations where it's clinically appropriate and safe to do so.

The MBS telehealth items have the same clinical requirements as the corresponding face-to-face consultation items.

Nurse practitioners do not need to be in their regular practice to provide telehealth services. They should use their provider number for their primary location, and must provide safe services in accordance with normal professional standards.

The removal of the patient-end support services for nurse practitioners may mean that obtaining specialist advice for patients is instead sought through a regular consultations. Nurse Practitioners who also qualify as mental health workers for Medicare may also consider case conferencing, noting MBS items that recognise allied health participation were implemented in November 2021.

How will these changes affect patients?

Patients should ask their service providers about their telehealth options, where clinically appropriate.

Who was consulted on the changes?

Consultation with stakeholders has informed the introduction and refinement of MBS telehealth items. The transition to permanent arrangements has also been informed by medical experts and key stakeholders within the health sector.

How will the changes be monitored and reviewed?

The Department of Health continues to monitor the use of the MBS telehealth items. Use of the items that does not seem to be in accordance with the relevant Medicare guidelines and legislation will be actioned appropriately.

Where can I find more information?



The full item descriptors and information on other changes to the MBS can be found on the MBS Online website at www.mbsonline.gov.au. You can also subscribe to future MBS updates by visiting [MBS Online](#) and clicking 'Subscribe'.

The Department of Health provides an email advice service for providers seeking advice on interpretation of the MBS items and rules and the Health Insurance Act and associated regulations. If you have a query relating exclusively to interpretation of the Schedule, you should email askMBS@health.gov.au.

If you are seeking advice in relation to Medicare billing, claiming, payments, or obtaining a provider number, please go to the Health Professionals page on the Services Australia website or contact Services Australia on the Provider Enquiry Line – 13 21 50.

Please note that the information provided is a general guide only. It is ultimately the responsibility of treating practitioners to use their professional judgment to determine the most clinically appropriate services to provide, and then to ensure that any services billed to Medicare fully meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the legislation. This sheet is current as of the Last updated date shown above, and does not account for MBS changes since that date.

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MBS TELEHEALTH ITEMS



Table 1: Nurse Practitioner continuing telehealth items

Service	Existing Items face to face	Telehealth items via video-conference	Telephone items – for when video-conferencing is not available
Attendance for an obvious problem	82200	91192	91193
Attendance less than 20 minutes	82205	91178	91189
Attendance at least 20 minutes	82210	91179	91190
Attendance at least 40 minutes	82215	91180	91191

Table 2: Pre-COVID telehealth items for removal 1 January 2022

Service	MBS telehealth support items
Attendance lasting less than 20 minutes that requires the provision of clinical support	82220
Attendance lasting at least 20 minutes that requires the provision of clinical support	82221
Attendance lasting at least 40 minutes that requires the provision of clinical support	82222
Attendance lasting less than 20 minutes that requires the provision of clinical support to a patient within residential care	82223
Attendance lasting at least 20 minutes that requires the provision of clinical support to a patient within residential care	82224
Attendance lasting at least 40 minutes that requires the provision of clinical support to a patient within residential care	82225