

COVID-19 Bulk Billed MBS Telehealth Services

20 April 2020

As part of the Australian Government's ongoing response to COVID-19, new temporary Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) telehealth items have been made available to allied health providers from 30 March 2020 until 30 September 2020.

The new temporary MBS telehealth items will offer allied health providers the option to deliver health care services by telephone or videoconferencing in order to protect patients and providers by reducing face-to-face communication and reduce the risk of community transmission of COVID-19.

The continuing availability of the new telehealth items will be reviewed prior to 30 September 2020.

Key Points

- **From 20 April 2020, allied health providers are no longer required to bulk-bill COVID-19 telehealth (video conference) and telephone consultations where the service is provided to concession card holders, children under 16 and those vulnerable to COVID-19. This means that allied health providers may now charge a co-payment for services provided to these groups.**
- **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.**
- **The new, temporary MBS telehealth items have similar requirements to normal timed consultation items.**
- **All Medicare eligible Australians can receive telehealth services.**
- **Providers do not need to provide telehealth services in their regular practice.**
- **Providers should use their provider number for their primary location.**
- **Providers must provide telehealth services safely and in accordance with normal professional standards.**

What does this mean for you?

If you are currently providing the following audiology services to patients under the MBS items listed below, you can now provide telehealth services for these items:

- [MBS Item 10952](#) - Audiology service provided to patients with chronic conditions and complex care needs.
- [MBS Item 81310](#) - Audiology service provided to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander patients who have been identified as needing follow-up allied health appointments.
- [MBS Item 82030](#) - Audiology service provided to a child, aged under 13 years, to assist in autism, pervasive developmental disorder and disability diagnosis and treatment.
- [MBS Item 82035](#) - Audiology service provided to a child, aged under 15 years, for treatment of a pervasive developmental disorder or eligible disability.

Please view the [Australian Government's COVID-19 MBS Telehealth Service Factsheet for a list of the corresponding MBS Telehealth and Telephone item numbers](#) (refer to the Allied Health Fact Sheet).

The following resource is also available and constantly updated by the Australian Government Department of Health:

- [Information on the billing processes for the new MBS telehealth items for COVID-19.](#)

What telehealth options are available?

Videoconference services are the preferred approach and can be provided by widely available video calling apps and software, including [Zoom](#), [Skype](#), FaceTime (for Apple devices only), [Google Duo](#) and [GoToMeeting](#).

When video conferencing is not available, audio-only services via telephone can be provided. Separate MBS item numbers are available for telephone services.

Please note: Specific equipment is not required to provide Medicare-compliant telehealth services. However, free versions of video calling applications used to deliver telehealth services may not meet applicable laws for security and privacy. You must ensure that your chosen telecommunication method meets your clinical requirements and satisfies privacy laws.

Any questions?

If you have a query relating to the COVID-19 Telehealth MBS items, please email Feiya Zhang at feiya.zhang@audiology.asn.au. Alternatively, you may wish to contact the Department of Health directly at AskMBS@health.gov.au.