

Telehealth Consultation Guidelines for Practitioners

About these Guidelines

The Telehealth Consultation Guidelines for Practitioners (Guidelines) apply in the provision of services delivered through telephonic and digital platforms. In particular, these Guidelines apply each time one of our Customers claims a Benefit for services you provide to them. These Guidelines do not replace Our Ancillary Provider Terms, and are to be understood in conjunction with Our Ancillary Provider Terms which applies to all Bupa recognised providers.

Definition of Telehealth

Telehealth is a method of delivering healthcare that involves the diagnosis and treatment of clinical conditions via phone or video link.

Telehealth consultations must be synchronous (delivered in real-time) and be proven to be effective in the treatment or management of a diagnosed clinical condition.

Guidelines for Telehealth Consultations

Eligibility

- Bupa will pay benefits towards recognised telehealth consultations where:
 - The patient is undergoing an existing course of treatment or;
 - A new patient has been referred by a GP or treating specialist or has been assessed as being suitable for telehealth consultations
 - The patient receiving care has not been admitted to hospital at the time of the consultation
 - The patient is not a patient of an emergency department at the time of the consultation
 - The patient is not eligible to receive any compensation, damages or benefits for the service from another source (such as Medicare)
 - The service is undertaken in accordance with industry association guidelines on telehealth consultations
 - Bupa has recognised telehealth consultations for approved allied health services
- The Practitioner must ensure that each telehealth consultation service must be delivered where it is considered:
 - appropriate for that individual patient/customer
 - appropriate for the specific condition being treated and intervention to be undertaken

Appropriateness of Telehealth Consultations

- The practitioner must have the competency and experience to deliver telehealth consultations in line with any industry guidelines applicable to their modality
- A comprehensive patient assessment process is required to ensure the suitability of telehealth consultations and the chosen delivery platform meets the needs of the patient/condition to be treated
- Informed consent must be obtained and recorded by the practitioner in the clinical notes prior to the commencement of the telehealth consultation

Privacy

- Where video consultations, recordings or still images are required for clinical purposes, recorded consent must be obtained by the practitioner as part of the telehealth consultation and done so in accordance with your Association's guidelines.

Telehealth Delivery Platform

- The Practitioner must ensure that the chosen platform for the delivery of telehealth consultations:
 - Is a secure method in the transmission of personal and private information and maintains patient confidentiality in line with The Privacy Act
 - Is technically reliable with adequate upload and download speeds
 - Is of high sound and video quality

Patient Setting

- Prior to the commencement of the consultation, the Practitioner must ensure that the patient:
 - Is undertaking the consultation in a private and secure location
 - Is in a location free of obstruction, ensuring all risks and hazards have been removed
 - Is in a location appropriate for the delivery of the consultation

Approved Telehealth Consultation Services

- Telehealth consultations must meet the following criteria for Bupa benefits to apply:
 - Must be delivered by a Bupa recognised practitioner
 - Both the practitioner and patient must be located within Australia at the time of the consultation
 - Must be undertaken using an appropriate telehealth delivery service that satisfies the requirements of the patient/condition to be treated, and is in accordance with industry association guidelines
 - Is considered a substitutional service to what would otherwise be undertaken as a face to face consultation
 - Meets the requirements of standard face to face consultation which would otherwise be undertaken (e.g. duration of consultation and clinical record keeping)

Billing for telehealth services

- Please ensure that you use the relevant telehealth item numbers as communicated by your association
- HICAPS claiming is available for selected modalities. Refer to the HICAPS website for further information

Amendments to these Guidelines

- Bupa HI reserves the right to amend these Guidelines and if amended will provide notification to relevant associations and update information on our website.

Recognised allied health services for Telehealth Consultations

Bupa have recognised the following allied health services for Telehealth Consultations:

Effective 30 March 2020

- Psychology
- Counselling
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Pathology
- Dietetics
- Eye therapy*

Effective 6 April 2020

- Physiotherapy
- Exercise Physiology

Effective 27 April 2020

- Podiatry*
- Midwifery

*For services up to and including 30 September 2020