



The Royal
Australian &
New Zealand
College of
Psychiatrists

Telepsychiatry



Medicare
benefits for
Telepsychiatry

OVERVIEW

All psychiatrists who have a Medicare provider number are eligible for Telehealth Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) item rebates and financial incentives for Telepsychiatry consultations conducted with a patient. There is no formal application process for Telehealth video consultations. Psychiatrists will be automatically considered eligible under Telehealth video consultations on the successful lodgement and payment of the first MBS Telehealth item number.

1

Patient eligibility and changes to Medicare rebates

The patient-end venue can be either the doctor's surgery, patient's home or another place with appropriate videoconferencing equipment.

Since 1st January 2013, eligibility for Telehealth MBS items is determined according to the Australian Standard Geographical Classification Remoteness Area (ASGC-RA) classifications. Telehealth MBS benefits are only available for services provided to patients outside of RA1 – Major Cities. To search for RA classifications go to: www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/content/locator

If the patient resides in an aged care facility or is a patient of an eligible Aboriginal Medical Service or Community Controlled Health Service, it does not have to be outside RA1.

Since 1st November 2012, the MBS Telehealth items require that the patient and remote psychiatrist are at least 15 kilometres apart. The minimum distance requirement does not apply to residents of Aged Care Facilities or patients of an Aboriginal Medical Service or Community Controlled Health Service.

Telehealth Medicare rebates are not payable for video consultations with an admitted hospital patient. This applies to both public and private admitted patients.

2

Supported consultations

A supported consultation is when the patient is accompanied by a 'Patient End' or 'Supporting Practitioner'. The support may be from their GP, a nurse practitioner, midwife, Aboriginal health worker or practice nurse. Having a support practitioner present enhances continuity and overall quality of care through the participation of the patient's usual health care providers in the specialist consultation. An unsupported consultation is when the patient is alone during the psychiatrist consultation. However, it is expected that clinical support would be on hand should it be necessary.

3

Telehealth MBS incentives and billings

3.1 MBS On-Board Telehealth financial incentive

The MBS Telehealth On-Board incentive is paid once per practitioner, regardless of the number of provider numbers the practitioner has. A specialist becomes eligible to receive an On-Board incentive payment after they provide their first Telehealth service.

The On-Board incentive is paid in two instalments. The first is paid after the first valid Telehealth MBS claim is processed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the second is paid after the tenth valid Telehealth MBS claim

is processed by DHS. The value of the second instalment will be determined by the value of the first instalment. For example, if a practitioner provides their first service and becomes eligible for the 2012–13 level (which totals \$4,800) then they will be entitled to \$1,600 for the first instalment and \$3,200 if they provide ten valid services before the end of the Incentive Program. Please note that the On-Board incentive will cease at the end of the 2014 financial year.

MBS Telehealth Video Consultation Incentives	2012-2013	2013-2014
On-board incentive		
1st on-board instalment	\$1600	\$1300
2nd on-board instalment (paid if 10 valid services provided before end of program)	\$3200	\$2600
Total on-board incentive	\$4800	\$3900
Telehealth service incentives paid when an eligible practitioner provides a service (paid quarterly)		
Specialist Service	\$48	\$39
Telehealth Bulk Billing Incentive (paid quarterly)		
Extra Telehealth Bulk Billing Incentive paid when the practitioner bulk bills a service	\$16	\$13

Table 1: MBS Telehealth Video Consultation Incentives

3.2 Telehealth Service Incentive

Telehealth Service Incentives paid each time an eligible practitioner provides a service.

3.3 Bulk Billing Incentive

Extra Telehealth Bulk Billing Incentive paid each time a practitioner bulk bills a service.

4 Patient authorisation when doing Telepsychiatry consults

Even though the psychiatrist and patient are not at the same location during a Telepsychiatry consultation, the patient's signature is still needed on the Bulk Bill (assignment of benefit) form under Section 20A of the Health Insurance Act.

There are three ways you can get the patient's signature:

1. The supporting practitioner can get the patient to sign the Bulk Bill (assignment of benefit) form at their end and send the form to you.
2. The psychiatrist can send the completed Bulk Bill (assignment of benefit) form to the patient to sign and return to the psychiatrist.
3. The psychiatrist can set up an email agreement with the patient. For more information on how to set this up go to www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/incentives/telehealth/information-bulk-billing.jsp

5 Billing a psychiatrist video consultation

To bill an MBS item for a psychiatrist video consultation (item 288) all of the following conditions must be met:

- an associated item that relates to the psychiatrist's service must be billed (291, 293, 296, 300, 302, 304, 306, 308, 310, 312, 314, 316, 318, 319, 348, 350 or 352);
- the service must be rendered in Australia;
- the service must be provided via videoconferencing (where both video and audio communication between the patient and specialist occurs);
- the patient must be located in a Telehealth eligible area and at the time of the attendance — at least 15 kms by road from the psychiatrist; OR is a care recipient in a residential care service; OR a patient of an Aboriginal Medical Service; OR an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service for which a direction made under subsection 19 (2) of the Act applies.

Example

If a consultant psychiatrist is providing an initial consultation on a new patient, from their consulting rooms, of more than 45 minutes, where a patient is referred to him/her by a referring practitioner and where the patient is a new patient for this consultant psychiatrist. When the video consultation occurs, the psychiatrist, who is remotely located from the patient, bills the relevant attendance item, in this case 296, and also bills the associated Telehealth item 288. Note the 'derived fee' for item 288 is 50% of the Medicare fee for item 296. That is, item 296 has a Medicare fee of \$260.30, so the 'derived fee' for item 288 in this case would be \$130.15. The Schedule fee is calculated by adding the fee for item 296 (\$260.30) and 50% of this amount for item 288 (\$130.15) giving a total fee of \$390.45. The Medicare rebate, being 85% of the Schedule fee, would be \$331.90. In addition, this service triggers a Telehealth incentive payment, and if it is the first TeleHealth service billed by the specialist provider, a one-off 'on board incentive' payment is also generated. If the service is bulk billed, a bulk bill incentive payment will also be made.



Additional MBS item for video consultations less than 10 minutes

Since 1st January 2013, there has been a new MBS Telehealth item for initial psychiatrist attendances where the video consultation is 10 minutes or less. The relevant item number is 113 (Schedule Fee \$64.20, Assigned Benefit 85% = \$54.60).

There must be no other initial consultation, including, face-to-face, that has taken place for a single course of treatment; and all other Specialist Telehealth MBS eligibility criteria must be met.

Item No	Scheduled Fee \$	Assigned Benefit (85%) \$	Telehealth Item No 288 (derived – 50% of scheduled fee) \$	Assigned Telehealth Benefit (85%) \$	Total Assigned Benefit \$	Telehealth Service Incentive (accrued amount paid quarterly) \$	Telehealth Bulk Bill Incentive (accrued amount paid quarterly) \$	Total Assigned Fee plus additional incentives \$
291	452.65	384.80	226.33	192.38	577.18	48.00	16.00	641.18
293	282.95	240.55	141.48	120.25	360.80	48.00	16.00	424.80
296	260.30	221.30	130.15	110.63	331.93	48.00	16.00	395.93
300	43.35	36.85	21.68	18.42	55.27	48.00	16.00	119.27
302	86.45	73.50	43.23	36.74	110.24	48.00	16.00	174.24
304	133.10	113.15	66.55	56.57	169.72	48.00	16.00	233.72
306	183.65	156.15	91.83	78.05	234.20	48.00	16.00	298.20
308	213.15	181.20	106.58	90.59	271.79	48.00	16.00	335.79
310	21.60	18.40	10.80	9.18	27.58	48.00	16.00	91.58
312	43.35	36.85	21.68	18.42	55.27	48.00	16.00	119.27
314	66.65	56.70	33.33	28.33	85.03	48.00	16.00	149.03
316	91.95	78.20	45.98	39.08	117.28	48.00	16.00	181.28
318	106.60	90.65	53.30	45.31	135.96	48.00	16.00	199.96
319	183.65	156.15	91.83	78.05	234.20	48.00	16.00	298.20
348	126.75	107.75	63.38	83.87	161.62	48.00	16.00	225.62
350	175	148.75	87.50	74.38	223.13	48.00	16.00	287.13
352	126.75	107.75	63.38	83.87	161.62	48.00	16.00	225.62

Source: RWAV (<https://www.rwav.com.au/upload/Rwav/Telehealth/Overview%20of%20Telehealth%20MBS%20Program%20Part%20%20-%20Telehealth%20MBS%20Scheduled%20Fees%20split%20by%20Speciality%20Jan%20%202013.pdf>)

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