

COVID-19 Bulk Billed MBS Telehealth Services

Nurse Practitioners

Fact Sheet

Version 2 / Up to date as of 6 April 2020

From 13 March 2020 to 30 September 2020 (inclusive), new MBS telehealth items are available for telehealth and phone services, as part of the COVID-19 response.

These services must be bulk billed for Commonwealth concession card holders, children under 16 years of age, and patients who are more vulnerable to COVID-19.

This includes a patient who:

- is required to self-isolate or self-quarantine in accordance with guidance issued by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee in relation to COVID-19; or
- is at least 70 years old; or
- if the person identifies as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent—is at least 50 years old; or
- is pregnant; or
- is the parent of a child aged under 12 months; or
- is being treated for a chronic health condition; or
- is immune compromised; or
- meets the current national triage protocol criteria for suspected COVID-19 infection.

What does this mean for providers?

Providers will benefit from the greater flexibility in how they deliver services to their patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Providers do not need to be in their regular practice to provide telehealth services. Providers who offer their services from home isolation or quarantine should use their provider number for their primary location and must provide safe services in accordance with normal professional standards.

The new telehealth services must be bulk billed, for Commonwealth concession card holders, children under 16 years of age, and patients who are more vulnerable to COVID-19, meaning MBS rebates are paid to the provider. Rebates will be paid at 85% of the new item fee amount, which have been increased to result in the same payment as an equivalent GP face to face service. (The Department of Health has not been able to amend the regulations, which set

out 100% rebates, due to the urgency of these arrangements).

For level B-C items, the attendance should include any of the following that are clinically relevant:

- Taking a short, detailed or extensive history, depending on the item
- Arranging any necessary investigation
- Implementing a management plan
- Providing appropriate preventative health care.

Where can I find more information?

- **COVID-19 National Health Plan resources** for the general public, health professionals and industry are available from the Australian Government Department of Health website www.health.gov.au/.
- **The full item descriptor(s)** 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.
- Subscribe to 'News for Health Professionals' on the Services Australia website and you will receive regular news highlights.

Nurse Practitioner Item Numbers

Item	COVID-19 Video conference items Must be bulk billed	Fee*
91192	Attendance for an obvious problem	\$9.75
91178	(Level B) Standard <20 mins	\$21.30
91179	(Level C) Long 20-40 mins	\$40.40
91180	(Level D) Prolonged ≥40 mins	\$59.50
Item	COVID-19 Telephone items Must be bulk billed	Fee*
91193	Attendance for an obvious problem	\$9.75
91189	(Level B) Standard < 20 mins	\$21.30
91190	(Level C) Long 20-40 mins	\$40.40
91191	(Level D) Prolonged ≥40 mins	\$59.50

Source: www.mbsonline.gov.au (Mar 2020) – refer to source for full item details including eligibility & restrictions.

*75% and/or 85%/100% rebate also applies to some of these item numbers

** Refer to MBS(Medicare Benefit Schedule) for full patient eligibility guidelines.