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Telehealth position statement for allied health

MEDIBANK CLINICAL ENGAGEMENT

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Telehealth position statement

Document overview:

This document outlines Medibank and ahM's position on telehealth consultations, as part of the COVID-19 response, for dietetics, speech pathology, exercise physiology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and podiatry. Details on psychology telehealth coverage are in a separate position statement.

By Tuesday 14th April 2020, Medibank and ahm have agreed to pay benefits for individual (one on one) consultations delivered via telehealth for dietetics, speech pathology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry and exercise physiology.

In line with national government COVID-19 initiatives, benefits will be paid towards consultations for the allied health professions until 30th September 2020.

Please note, due to the rapidly evolving nature of the COVID 19-pandemic this document is subject to further review and may be amended at any time.

Provision of Telehealth Services

The provision of private health insurance rebates for video and phone consultations aims to support health professionals to deliver accessible, timely healthcare.

Telehealth is a method of delivering healthcare that involves the diagnosis and treatment of clinical conditions via phone and/or video conference where both a visual and audio link has been established between a patient and their treating health professional

Telehealth consultations are conducted in real-time and are proven to be effective in the treatment or management of some diagnosed clinical conditions.

Guideline for Telehealth consultations for allied health professions (excluding psychology)

Ensuring Medibank and ahm members can access quality service delivery and evidence-based care is paramount. As a direct response to the COVID-19 Medibank and ahm have consulted with Allied Health Professions Australia, Private Healthcare Australia and relevant peak bodies to determine to the best way to support patients to access and maintain continuity of care whilst ensuring clinicians are working within their scope of practice to deliver evidence-based care.

This guideline outlines the following recommendations for telehealth consultations applying to eligible Medibank and ahm members, who have an extras product that includes cover for the allied health profession where*:

- The patient is undergoing an existing course of treatment or has been a patient of the clinic/health professional in the past six months, as preference for efficacy supported by telehealth outcomes (to be defined by clinician not Medibank).
- For new patients, consultations will remain available but preference for GP or treating specialist to provide recommendation for treatment options where possible**.
- The clinician should use their clinical reasoning to determine if the patient is clinically appropriate to receive the service via telehealth and must work within their scope of practice.

- The service is delivered between Tuesday 14th of April 2020 and the 30th of September 2020 for Medibank members (and between 30th March to 30th September for ahm members).
- The service is undertaken in accordance with each profession’s telehealth policy and guidelines.

* Normal waiting periods and annual limits apply to telehealth consultations.

****Please note**, Medibank and ahm members will not be required to provide proof of their general practitioner’s recommendation.

The telehealth consultation should not be part of a consultation where a Medicare benefit applies.

Service delivery

Not every practice will be offering telehealth services. It is the responsibility of the member to speak with their allied health practitioner to determine if they are offering telehealth services.

New Item numbers and Submitting Claims

Medibank members can submit claims through usual channels including My Medibank and the My Medibank app. When they login to My Medibank, there will be a message on that page providing directions on how to make these claims.

ahm members can submit claims through channels including online, ahm app or email.

Please note, telehealth claims will not be able to be submitted via electronic claiming channels (HICAPS and Healthpoint).

The following new telehealth item numbers and descriptions have been established and provided to all Private Health funds, HICAPS and Healthpoint. It is at each fund’s discretion as to whether they will use the allocated telehealth item numbers.

Medibank and ahm will accept the following new telehealth item numbers and descriptions. These telehealth item numbers are available for all Medibank and ahm recognised providers, not just our Medibank Members’ Choice providers.

The benefits paid towards these telehealth consultations the same as the equivalent face to face consultation.

Modality	New item code and description		Established /Equivalent item code and description	
Dietitians	301	Individual Initial/Referred Assessment by teleconsultation	500	Individual Initial Consult
Dietitians	302	Individual Subsequent Treatment by teleconsultation	600	Individual Review Consult
Speech Pathology	501	Individual Initial/Referred Assessment by teleconsultation	310	Initial Individual Consult/Assessment
Speech Pathology	502	Individual Subsequent Treatment by teleconsultation	340	Subsequent Individual Consult/Assessment

Physiotherapy	811	Individual Initial/Referred Assessment by teleconsultation	500	Assessment Consult
Physiotherapy	812	Individual Subsequent Treatment by teleconsultation	505	Subsequent Consult
Occupational Therapy	601	Individual Initial/Referred Assessment by teleconsultation	100	initial Individual assessment
Occupational Therapy	602	Individual Subsequent Treatment by teleconsultation	200	individual assessment/Treatment
Podiatry Therapy	901	Individual Initial/Referred Assessment by teleconsultation	004	Comprehensive Service - New Patient
Podiatry Therapy	902	Individual Subsequent Treatment by teleconsultation	014	Comprehensive Service - Established Patient
Exercise Physiology	710	Individual Initial/Referred Assessment by teleconsultation	102	Initial Assessment
Exercise Physiology	712	Individual Subsequent Treatment by teleconsultation	202	Standard Consult

Provider queries relating to Medibank can be directed to the Medibank provider help desk. The contact details are listed below:

- Members' Choice Ancillary providers - 1300 720 165
- Non Members' Choice Ancillary Providers - 1300 654 887

Provider queries for ahm can be directed to:

- ahm contact centre - 134 246 (follow the prompts to the provider line).

Telehealth consultations for Physiotherapy (additional information)

The Australian Physiotherapy Association has identified that there is very strong evidence for the management of the following primary conditions:

- Post orthopaedic surgery rehabilitation (e.g. Total hip or knee replacement)
- Chronic musculoskeletal condition (e.g. osteoarthritis)
- Cardiac rehabilitation
- Pulmonary rehabilitation, or
- pelvic floor muscle training,

Medibank and ahm have chosen not to limit telehealth services to these conditions. The clinician should use their clinical reasoning to determine if the patient is clinically appropriate to receive the service via telehealth and should work within their scope of practice.