

MBS Mental Health and Well-Being Telehealth Support Items for Patients in Drought-Affected Communities

Six new Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items have been introduced to enable GPs and non-specialist medical practitioners to provide general mental health and well-being support services by video conference to patients in drought-affected areas.

MBS items 2121, 2150 and 2196 (for GPs) and MBS items 894, 896 and 898 (for non-specialist medical practitioners) may be used to provide telehealth services by doctors working in areas belonging to declared councils under the DCP, or in Modified Monash (MM) areas 3 to 7, where there is an existing relationship between the doctor and the patient.



For further information visit [MBS online](#)

The Department of Health has approved Healthdirect Australia offering Video Call at no charge to GPs and practices wishing to access the new MBS items for mental health via telehealth in drought affected areas*.

**GPs will be able to claim the new items 2121, 2150 and 2196 and non-VR items 894, 896 and 898 funded at the current Level B to D general attendances.*

To be eligible, the patient must live at least 15 km away from the doctors' rooms in a council area declared to be in drought or a Modified Monash region 3-7.

- Video Call is a purpose built suite of services, tools and resources funded by the Commonwealth and State health departments and was developed to support telehealth/healthcare delivery in rural and remote settings.
- It is a browser based and can be accessed by the clinician or patient via Google Chrome or Apple Safari on a Windows/Mac PC, smartphone or tablet.
- Video Call works on low bandwidths – 3G/4G or ADSL is sufficient.
- It is configured to mimic clinical flow/ waiting rooms - clinicians prepare to engage with their patients as normal, except they join patients via the clinic's online waiting area instead of its physical one.
- Consumers attend appointments via the clinic's website and wait in their own private room. No account, special software or dial-in details are needed.
- Video Call is used across Australia throughout a range of health services.
- For further information please see the flyer attached or visit the Healthdirect [Video Call](#) page.

Healthdirect Australia have made available a webinar recording to demonstrate Healthdirect Video Call to interested GPs and practice staff please see over for further details on accessing this recording.

Healthdirect Video Call demonstration

Healthdirect have recorded a webinar to provide an introduction to Healthdirect Video Call, its functionality and provide examples of current use in health, the session covers:

- What is Healthdirect Video Call?
- Main features and functions
- Examples of use in health
- Support
- Questions and next steps

To access the webinar <https://register.gotoweinar.com/recording/1326427033178771467>

In addition, next steps and how to get started have been outlined below.

Next Steps



Begin using Healthdirect Video Call!



Simple patient-centric video consultations



Video access to clinical services (telehealth) benefits patients, health care providers and the health system.

To embed video consultations into everyday practice, it helps if the process mimics the way patients usually attend appointments, without additional steps or resources for health care providers.

About Video Call

Healthdirect Video Call is a purpose-built suite of services, tools, and resources.

Video Call makes it easy for clinicians to say, "Yes, you can attend your consultation via video."

Video Call is accessed wholly via the web so it is available to use anywhere, on everyday devices with a good internet connection.

The Video Call service is delivered by Healthdirect Australia through the support of Commonwealth and state health departments.

How it works

Video Call provides a single, consistent entry point on the service's webpage for all patients, where they enter an online waiting area for their appointment.

Staff manage their clinics as usual. Video appointments are handled through existing processes and systems and are run like any other consultation.

Patients attend appointments via the clinic's website and wait in their own private room, in the waiting area. No account, special software or dial-in details are needed.

Clinicians prepare to engage with their patients as normal, except they join patients via the clinic's online waiting area instead of its physical one.

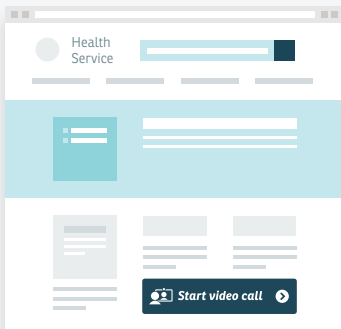
Health Services have access to all the support, advice and resources they need to help with adoption and use of Video Call.

Benefits for the Australian Health System

- Make travel optional for patients in a way that is scalable and sustainable
- Reduced requirement for extra resources or systems to support video consulting
- Increase the range of services available, especially outside metro areas
- Significantly reduce barriers, simplifying access to video consultations for all involved
- Health-grade quality, security, privacy and data protection.
- Easily transfer patients between health services
- Save time and money, improve access and care

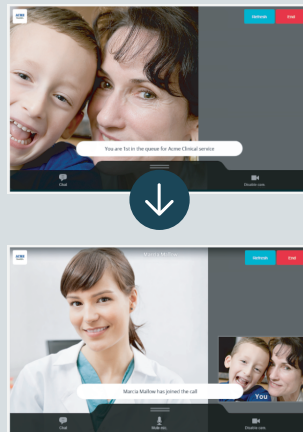
Familiar process for consumers and health care providers

Patient opens health service website in browser, clicks **Start video call** button

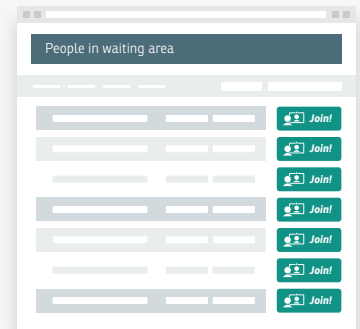


Patient does not require a login account, room ID, or password

Patient is directed to their own, private video consulting room...



Clinician views waiting room queue in web browser



Clinician joins patient's video room and the consultation begins

Video Call is making a difference

Video Call is already used by many public health services. Video Call is designed for simple, patient-centred telehealth in any healthcare setting. Examples include consultations between patients in Western NSW residential aged care homes and their local GPs, and the directly Observant Treatment Supervision (Video-DOTS) programs for tuberculosis, as well as applications in mental health and paediatrics services.

Using Video Call from home, work or dedicated 'kiosks' in community centres is a proven way of offering rural and remote clients a way of regularly seeing their clinician, counsellor or psychiatrist without the travel to a town or city.



"I can participate from home or work using my own device. Seeing my counsellor didn't interfere with my life."

Client interview, Murrumbidgee – Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Telehealth Service

"The consult saves my daughter taking me to appointments and I think it is a wonderful innovation so that we don't have to run up to the hospital all the time."

Client interview from Southern Cross Care Facilities, Broken Hill (Western NSW Primary Health Network – Telehealth Program in Aged Care)

"Easy system, great access to specialist care avoiding travel with patient only needing a small part of his day out from school and normal activity. Parents reassured without the stress of travel."

Yarrowonga GP interview

"We've found from patient feedback just what a difference it makes to them."

Marianne Heppell, Oncology Nurse, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre



All that is required for patients and clinicians to use Video Call is internet access, a Google Chrome or Apple Safari browser on a Windows/Mac PC or smartphone or tablet. Support for Microsoft Edge is expected soon.

For more information visit:

<https://about.healthdirect.gov.au/video-call>

To discuss next steps, contact:

videocall@healthdirect.org.au or call: **(02) 9263 9000**