

6 November 2023

Attn: MBS Review Advisory Committee

Dear MRAC team

Re: ASDP Input into the MBS post-implementation review of telehealth items

The ASDP welcomes the opportunity to respond to the MBS post-implementation review of telehealth items.

The ASDP (ASDP.au, previously known as NBPSA) is a not-for-profit professional society. Our members (more than 800) are specialist medical doctors with an interest in the assessment and care of children who experience problems impacting their development (including behaviour, mental health and overall well-being).

We are glad that many of the points we raised during the initial consultation on telehealth items have been reflected within the MRAC post-implementation Report.

We would however, like the MRAC to consider an amendment to Recommendation 9 of the Report: "For initial consultations, make non-GP specialist MBS items available only face-to-face, with subsequent consultations available through telephone or video at the clinician's discretion."

Applying this restriction would have the potential to significantly disadvantage patients in rural locations, whose nearest specialist may be hundreds of kilometres away. Further, patients from low socio-economic demographics may be precluded from seeking specialist care where the costs and accessibility of in-person appointments may be prohibitive. Lack of access to transport, lack of resources to pay for travel and accommodations costs, and the requirement to take leave from work for travel to appointments can put in-person appointments out of reach for some of the most vulnerable members of society.

This is ultimately an issue of equity of access to medical care, and ASDP seeks the amendment of Recommendation 9 to allow telehealth (via phone or video) appointments for initial specialist consultations as well as for follow up appointments.

Thank you for your consideration. We would be pleased to expand on this submission at any time.

Kind regards,



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