

New telehealth item numbers for GP FPS providers

On 1 November 2018, Medicare Australia released new item numbers for patients in rural and remote locations to claim rebates for video consultations through the Medicare Benefits Schedule 'Better access to psychiatrists, psychologists and general practitioners' (Better Access) initiative. This enables rural and remote patients to access mental health treatment plans via video consultations.

As of 1 November 2018, general practitioners accredited by the [General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration](https://gpmhsc.org.au)¹ (GPMHSC) and registered with Medicare as a provider of Focussed Psychological Strategies (FPS) can now access new telehealth item numbers 2729 and 2731 for the provision of treatment in connection to a mental health care plan.

This service is delivered via video conference and requires both a visual and audio link between a patient and their eligible health professional. Eligible patients are required to have a mental health treatment plan, be located in Modified Monash Model areas 4–7 and must be located more than 15 km from the GP. The treating GP can be located anywhere in Australia, subject to the 15 km minimum distance requirement being met.

More information on the new items is available on the [Department of Health](http://www.health.gov.au)² website. If you are interested in becoming an FPS provider, visit the [GPMHSC](https://gpmhsc.org.au)³ website.

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) has developed a [resource for consumers](#)⁴ to assist them in understanding their eligibility with accessing sessions through the new telehealth item numbers.

Other useful resources to assist in the set-up of telehealth in practice

- *Implementation guidelines for video consultations in general practice* (RACGP) <https://www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/technology/telehealth/guidelines-and-standards/implementation-guidelines-for-video-consultations>
- *Guidelines for interprofessional collaboration between general practitioners and other medical specialists providing video consultations* (RACGP) <https://www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/technology/telehealth/guidelines-and-standards/interprofessional-collaboration>
- *Standards for general practices* (5th edition) (RACGP) <https://www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/practice-standards/standards-5th-edition/standards-for-general-practices-5th-ed>
- Guidelines for technology-based patient consultations (MBA) <https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/codes-guidelines-policies/technology-based-consultation-guidelines.aspx>
- Telehealth Standards (ACRRM) <http://www.ehealth.acrrm.org.au/telehealth-standards>
- Telehealth in psychiatry (RANZCP) <https://www.ranzcp.org/Publications/Telehealth-in-psychiatry>

References

1. General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration <https://gpmhsc.org.au/>
2. Better Access Telehealth Services for people in rural and remote areas <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-ba-telehealth>
3. GP provider of Focussed Psychological Strategies <https://gpmhsc.org.au/InfoSection/Index/c4dbd3ef-e7bd-48c3-9a73-0e0f85372111>
4. Psychological services via telehealth (videoconference) for people living in rural and remote Australia <https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/fd748495-90e7-40d8-bedb-c3d7999cbb2d/18APS-Telehealth-Consumers.pdf>

