

Medical Board of Australia

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

Via email: medboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au

Tuesday, 10 January 2023

RE: Medical Board, Draft Revised Telehealth consultations with patients

The Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation (ASMOF) is the Doctors Union, we represent over 14,000 Registered Medical Practitioners including Staff Specialists, Post Graduate Fellows, Clinical Academics, Career Medical Officers, and Doctors in Training, including interns, Resident Medical Officers, and Registrars. Our members are directly employed by the Public Hospital System, Affiliated Health Facilities, Private Hospitals and in community health.

ASMOF welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Medical Boards draft revised guidelines on telehealth consultations. After reviewing AHPRA's initial ['Technology-based patient consultations'](#) guidelines (January 2012), against the latest revision of [consultation guidelines](#) (December 2022), ASMOF submit that the proposed updates are generally reasonable, with the exception of item ["\(14\)Follow-up and record keeping"](#).

ASMOF urge the medical board to consider the following feedback with reference to the accessibility and operation of subsections (a) and (d)-

*"14. In addition to the information that would be documented in a face-to-face consultation, keep a record of **a.** the type of technology used during the consultation, and **d.** consent from all participants if the consultation is recorded and/or when information is uploaded to digital health infrastructure"*


Feedback

- **14.a. "the type of technology used during the consultation"**
 - ASMOF suggest that the phrasing of item 14.a. should be simplified to indicate whether video or telephone telehealth is used.
- **14.d. "consent from all participants if the consultation is recorded and/or when information is uploaded to digital health infrastructure"**
 - ASMOF accept that the premise is both logical and reasonable but will prove impractical for specific patients undergoing psychiatric treatment.
 - Guidance relating to consent from "all participants" in the context of tele-health consultations will be unfeasible as it is dependent of the patient's capacity to provide informed consent.

For example, patients with psychotic illness may be required to be examined under a treatment order but may choose to withhold consent when they are not necessarily able to.

- ASMOF recommend that the Medical Board should consider the inclusion of a separate section relating to the practical enforceability of technology-based consultations where consent may be an issue of capacity or by order of the courts.

Sincerely,



Dr Antony Sara,
Federal President
Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation