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Dietitians welcome permanent telehealth

Flexibility in how Australians see their dietitian is here to stay.

Coming into effect next year, accessing an Accredited Practising Dietitian via telehealth will be a permanent feature through Medicare.

Since the introduction of telehealth at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dietitians Australia has constantly pressured the Government to make this vital tool permanent, in the fight for better nutrition care.

“We commend the Government on this decision as telehealth has helped break through some of the barriers faced by Australians when seeking dietetic health care,” said Robert Hunt, CEO of Dietitians Australia.

“Over 35% of our population are living with a nutrition related chronic disease¹. Providing Australians with the option of accessing their dietitian either virtually or in-person will make it easier for everyone to put their health first,” said Robert.

Across the past two years, dietitians have reported that telehealth has helped reduce their clients travel impacts (such as travel costs and time) as well as the health impacts of travelling for clients with conditions such as chronic fatigue, mobility issues and those who are immune compromised.

Those in lockdowns or affected by border closures, fly-in fly-out workers, parents and carers, have also benefited from the option of virtual healthcare.

“Telehealth dietetic services have been shown to be as effective as face-to-face services¹ – so you can be assured you will receive quality care, regardless of how you see your dietitian,” said Robert.

Dietitians Australia applauds the government’s commitment to on-going dietetic telehealth services.

“We look forward to engaging with the Department of Health to support the delivery of dietetic telehealth services, as this helps all Australians to access the best possible care for their nutrition needs,” said Robert.

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For media enquiries and interviews, contact Pattie King, Dietitians Australia 0409 661 920.

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¹Kelly, JT, Allman-Farinelli, M, Chen, J, et al. Dietitians Australia position statement on telehealth. Nutr Diet. 2020; 1– 10. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1747-0080.12619>