

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 2 April 2020

Dietitians are now available for consultations via video conference and phone appointments (Medicare and DVA rebates available)

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) commends the government's decision to expand telehealth Medicare and Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) services for allied health, including dietitians, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Coming into effect this week, this was a critical and important move to ensure the continuation of care and to help slow the spread of infection.

Australians seeing their dietitian, under a chronic disease management plan, for eating disorder treatment and management or through the Department of Veteran Affairs, are now able to have this consultation via a bulk-billed video-conference or phone appointment.

“Community based allied health professionals, such as dietitians, are a valuable resource to help Australians maintain their health in the community. Dietitians are now able to support their clients via online platforms and phone consultations as well as through in person appointments, to provide continued clinical nutrition care and guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said DAA CEO Robert Hunt.

Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) are well equipped to provide online services as clinical treatment can be easily communicated, allowing for a seamless transition in the continuation of care.

“Dietitians deliver an essential service and telehealth access provides peace of mind regarding concerns of exposure to infection,” said Hunt.

Telehealth is an efficient, responsive and patient centered delivery model for managing chronic disease and malnutrition. Australians are assured their telehealth or phone consultation appointment will be a suitable means of nutrition care and support, with large trials finding telephone and video-conference delivered nutrition interventions are just as effective as face to face appointments for chronic disease self-management.

“Continuing to see your dietitian is critical to reduce the impacts of poor nutrition, such as malnutrition. This helps prevent additional strain on our hospital system, which will require its resources to be focused towards incoming cases of COVID-19,” said Hunt.

Accredited Practising Dietitians are available for both in-person and telehealth appointments. Find your local APD via daa.asn.au/find-an-apd/ or call 1800 812 942. **ENDS**

**For further information or to organise an interview with Robert Hunt, DAA CEO,
contact Pattie King, Dietitians Association of Australia on 0409 661 920**