



The Mid North Coast Local Health District has implemented a new initiative to improve the quality of communication between rural and remote patients, local GPs and MNCLHD clinicians and specialists through the use of video conferencing for appointments.

A consultation conducted over video conferencing in conjunction with a patient in the GP rooms and their specialist or clinician can greatly improve the quality and coordination of care for the patient, compared with the traditional discharge summary and GP follow up.



## **Main Criteria for Telehealth Consultations**

### Health Care Professionals

The MBS payment criteria for services rendered at the patient end of a Telehealth consultation require a clinical support person be present with the patient during the consultation. This clinician should, if possible, be the GP, but there are also MBS item numbers if the support person is a Practice Nurse or Nurse Practitioner. Each health care professional has a different MBS item number associated with them.

### Video and Audio

The MBS states that both the video and audio components must be used in order for the video conference item numbers to be claimed. For this reason it is important to ensure that the Practice computers and/or devices used have both camera, speaker and microphone capabilities.

The MNCLHD will be connecting with Practices through Microsoft Lync.

The benefit of this arrangement for the Practice is that there is no cost associated in purchasing special software.

To participate in a meeting the Practice will need to install a “plug in” that is downloaded.

This download only needs to be done once for each computer or device being utilised for Lync video conferences.

### Appointment Duration

For GP attendance there are different MBS item numbers depending on the duration of the appointment.

### Patient Clinical Notes

As with any consultation, MBS requires records to be kept of the consultation from the Health Care Professionals at both ends.

More information on MBS items is available at:

<http://www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/connectinghealthservices-itemlist>

**For more information about the MNCLHD  
Online Appointment Initiative visit the website  
<http://mnclhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services/telehealth/>**