



ANZCA

FPM

CEO

Australian and New Zealand
College of Anaesthetists

Monday 13 February 2023

AHPRA / Medical Board of Australia
Email: medboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au

Dear Medical Board of Australia,

Submission on draft guideline reforms to Australian telehealth consultations

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), the Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM), is committed to setting the highest standards of clinical practice in the fields of anaesthesia, perioperative medicine and pain medicine. As one of the largest medical colleges in Australia, ANZCA is responsible for the postgraduate training programs of anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians, in addition to promoting best practice and ongoing continuous improvement that contributes to a high-quality health system.

Thank you for your call for submissions on potential reforms to Australia's telehealth consultation system.

ANZCA broadly supports telehealth reforms from a perioperative perspective, insofar as they allow for multi-disciplinary teams of medical and allied health professionals to work together more easily, especially with regard to patients in rural and remote settings.

The college particularly endorses the following sections of the existing guidelines:

- Guideline 3.c. Which states that practitioners should be informed that they may have access to others being present during consultations, such as "other health practitioners";
- And Guideline 4. Which states the need to "ensure access to specialist care and that it may be impractical for a face-to-face consultation to occur in the context of a continuing clinical relationship."

The proposed changes, where increased emphasis is given to the need for practitioners to "[continuously assess] the appropriateness of the telehealth consultation and whether a direct physical examination of the patient is necessary." is critical. As per recommendation 4 of the existing guidelines, there are many situations where face-to-face meetings are necessary and potentially lifesaving.

Relatedly, the college stresses that any reforms should not lead to a diminishment of funding for direct ("face-to-face") medical treatment, but otherwise considers best-practice telehealth to be a means of enhancing Australia's healthcare system.

If you wish to respond to this letter, please contact policy@anzca.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

Mr Nigel Fidgeon
Chief Executive Officer

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