

# Australian Medical Association Limited

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## **AMA welcomes guidelines for telehealth which support real time direct consultations**

The Australian Medical Association has welcomed new guidelines for telehealth consultations released by the Medical Board of Australia (MBA), which are intended to raise standards and ensure patients receive the best possible care, as Australians increasingly take advantage of this convenient way of accessing health care.

The MBA issued the revised guidelines in response to the proliferation of telehealth start-ups which have drawn criticism for issuing prescriptions after a brief online survey is completed by a patient, who may never have seen a GP face-to-face or online.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said the MBA revision of the guidelines was necessary to build a sound foundation for telehealth now and into the future.

“The rapid growth of telehealth in recent years spurred on by the Covid-19 pandemic means it is important doctors have clear guidance on its use.

“The guidelines strike the right balance by ensuring telehealth remains accessible for patients, while at the same time discouraging poor models of care that can result in missed or misdiagnosis.

“Telehealth should be seen as an additional tool to assist doctors to provide good medical care to their patients. It should be used to augment and build on the care provided by a traditional face-to-face consultation.

“The guidelines note that while best practice use of telehealth is in the context of a continuing clinical relationship, there are other circumstances where it will be appropriate.

“They also make clear that prescribing in the absence of a real-time patient–doctor consultation for patients with no existing relationship is not appropriate and rarely acceptable.”

The guidelines are [available on the MBA website](#)

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