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TELEHEALTH, E-PRESCRIBING ARRANGEMENTS MUST BE EXTENDED

An interim Parliamentary Committee report has backed the AMA’s calls to make telehealth a permanent component of the Australian health system, and for e-prescribing to be implemented as quickly as possible.

The Select Committee on Financial Technology and Regulatory Technology has made the recommendations in its interim report.

“The AMA has long advocated for Medicare-subsidised telehealth consultations, and temporary Medicare COVID-19 arrangements have shown the value of telehealth,” AMA President, Dr Omar Khorshid, said today.

“The telehealth items have supported the provision of care during these very difficult times, and have been embraced by patients and doctors.

“The AMA is in discussions with the Commonwealth Government about the long-term future of Medicare-funded telehealth for patients who need to see their GP or non-GP specialist.

“This is an ongoing piece of work. In the meantime, the AMA has called for the extension until March next year of the temporary telehealth items, which are due to expire at the end of this month.

“While work on e-prescribing is progressing very quickly, it is still in a limited testing phase. We welcome the Government’s commitment to its roll-out and want to see the extension of temporary COVID-19 arrangements that have allowed pharmacists to dispense medication using a digital image of a prescription.

“With Australia still in the midst of a global pandemic, these temporary arrangements must continue. They are essential to efforts to contain the spread of the virus.

“The AMA is keen to see the Government make a decision on the extension of these temporary arrangements as soon as possible. Practices are already taking appointments for October and beyond.

“Practices and patients alike need certainty about the availability of telehealth, particularly for vulnerable patients.”

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